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COMMENTARY

EUROPE TURNS TO THE RIGHT

The Dangerous Weakness of the Democratic Left

DAVID C. WILLIAMS

EUROPEANS used to remark on the fatality by which, between the wars, governments of the Left in France confronted governments of the Right in Great Britain. Since the end of World War II this political schism has reappeared on a larger scale: it is now a schism between Europe and America. While all Europe seemed to be plunging left after the war, America turned to the Republicans and elected the 80th Congress. Now that the Fair Deal has triumphed and the tide of opinion is running to what may be called the Left in the United States, in most of Western Europe the Right has triumphed. Governor Dewey has relinquished his presidential ambitions, but his specter is haunting Europe.

The change has come with breathtaking rapidity. Only three years ago, the Communists departed from Continental governments in which they had played a prominent part since Europe's liberation from the Nazis. As recently as last spring, the leaders of British Labor were saying that the choice for Europe lay between communism and socialism; capitalism, they were confident, was dead beyond recall. The summer's events dispelled this illusion. In an election in which "free enterprise" was the clearly stated issue, two-thirds of the West German voters voted for the conservatism of the Right. At the European Assembly in Strasbourg, rightists were in a two-thirds majority: out of a total membership of 101, the Left could claim only 31 Socialists and perhaps half a dozen left-wing Catholics.

To conservative Americans, aside from those who are too firmly isolationist to concern themselves with Europe, this trend of events is most encouraging. They see in it the first delectable fruits of America's large postwar expenditures overseas. More liberal Americans find it rather saddening. They had hoped that American aid to European democracies would be followed by a great upsurge of "progressive forces" abroad, and they tend to blame their government because old and familiar faces populate the political scene. Both views rest squarely on the assumption, which owes much to the radical talk of the Paris cafés, that Europe is naturally inclined to the Left and can only be pushed to the Right by American pressure.

MANY expected—either with hope or fear—that the aftermath of the war would provoke a shift to the Left in the European political spectrum. But, as DAVID C. WILLIAMS here points out—and tries to explain—it is the Right which, outside the areas of Russian domination, has shown the greater tenacity and endurance and has dominated Continental politics. Mr. Williams, London representative of Americans for Democratic Action, has contributed to the *Nation*, the London *Tribune*, and other periodicals.

Actually, little of the credit or blame really belongs to America. The shape of present-day Europe is, in fact, deeply rooted in its history. Europe's innate conservatism deserves more attention than it has hitherto received, for the initiative in Western Europe is now firmly in the hands of the conservatives, and is likely to remain there for the foreseeable future. The survival of socialism in Scandinavia, and perhaps in an attenuated form in Britain, hardly affects the issue. The far Northern democracies have little impact on the Continent, and British influence is at its lowest ebb in generations.

By and large, Americans fail to recognize the degree to which the feudal traditions that our early settlers left behind still survive in the Old World. The idea of a social hierarchy, according to which the few are born to rule and the many to be ruled, remains very strong. Even in Britain, after four years of Labor in office, the mass inferiority complex of the British working class is still a vital factor in politics. It accounts largely for the immense hold of Ernest Bevin on the trade unionists: "One of our own chaps," the British worker marvels to himself, "and he's actually ordering those Foreign Office snobs about!" In Belgium, under the nominally Socialist premiership of Paul-Henri Spaak, trade unionists found it easier to approach our ECA mission than their own aristocratic civil service. The collapse of the middle-class democratic revolutions of 1848 crippled European parliamentary institutions, and in nations like Germany, France, Italy, and Austria they enjoyed only a precarious existence, against a background of authoritarianism and actual or potential violence. The risings of the European working class after the First World War met with equal failure, its leadership being fractured by the struggle between Socialists and Communists, and touching tragi-comic depths of humiliation when a mob of German workers kept obediently off the government's grass. At the outbreak of World War II, the Right was back in power everywhere.

The catastrophic experiences of the war and the occupation seemed at first to have dealt a death blow to the European Right. It emerged, to the extent that it emerged at all in the first post-liberation years, deeply discredited. Some few conservative leaders had taken part in their national resistance movements, but many more had collaborated with the Nazis, or had, in the Axis countries, been Nazis or Fascists themselves. Others had done neither the one thing nor the other, and could boast only that they had survived.

It is small wonder that the Right stayed discreetly out of the political limelight. Discretion was reinforced by the extent to which the prestige of the victorious Red Army cast its shade over Europe. Communist parties mushroomed to fantastic dimensions, and for a time set the tone of public life. Few intellectuals dared openly to criticize Russia or the Communists, and even respectable businessmen contributed to party funds. As late as 1948, ECA publicists working in France found many bourgeois Frenchmen too wary to express public gratitude for American aid.

Three years of the Truman Doctrine, two years of the European Recovery Program, and one year of the North Atlantic Pact have changed all that. In France and Italy, though the Communist parties remain strong, they are completely isolated; elsewhere they are in full decay.

Many Americans placed great hope in the non-Communist Left of Europe, consisting mainly of the Social Democrats. In his book *The Vital Center,* Arthur Schlesinger Jr. tells us that the initials "N.C.L." figured frequently on memoranda passed about within the State Department, under the very noses of the Republican majorities in Congress. Considerable effort was devoted to convincing the man in the street that a Socialist Europe would not menace the American way of life. In sympathetic surroundings, liberal Americans became really eloquent. Said Justice Douglas to the 1948 CIO convention: "A new Europe is being born. New leaders have come to power in the countries of Western Europe. In almost every instance their strength is in the labor movement. . . . The fact is that there has come out of the Nazi crucible of death a vigorous, alert, and politically-minded labor party in every Western European country."

Such hopes proved, to say the least, oversanguine. The Social Democrats have been in decline for a generation. Their Continental parties were saddled with doctrinaire Marxist programs which could not possibly attract a majority of the voters – programs which were absurd once it was clear that the Socialists, as compared to the Communists and the fascists, had no stomach for the tactics of revolutionary violence. For despite their Marxist jargon, the Social Democrats were decent and law-abiding folk, helpless in the jungle that was Europe between the two World Wars. They were powerless to deal with the world depression of the 30's, and, except in Vienna, offered little opposition to the fascist seizure of power. Not constituted for conspiracy, they acquired in the resistance movements nothing like the laurels of their Communist rivals.

As they emerged from the war, the Social Democrats still retained substantial popular support. In Germany and Austria, widespread hatred for the Russians helped them keep the allegiance of the workers. In France and Italy, their following among the civil servants and other white-collar workers was large enough to make them important, and as long as the Communists remained in the government, they held a strategic central position. Once the Communists departed, however, the Socialists remaining in the cabinets became more and more the political prisoners of their conservative colleagues. Their troubles were multiplied by the unrealistic policies they advocated as a matter of principle. Controls and rationing worked well among the orderly and self-disciplined peoples of Scandinavia, Britain, and Holland; they were futile in the Latin nations, and in a Germany and an Austria disorganized by total defeat.

The Right had counsels more suited to the dominant European temper. The gospel of the Communists was one for heroes; most Europeans had taken no part in the resistance movement, and as memories of the occupation years grew fainter, they ceased to be ashamed that they had not. Socialism demanded too much in the way of self-sacrifice. The easy slogan of the Right—"Enrich yourselves!"—fell upon willing ears. The power that had been wrenched from the Communists and had fallen from the hands of the Socialists, returned to Europe's Old Dealers.

EUROPE'S present leaders are sober and unadventurous men, as befits the mood of peoples who have lived through enough disasters to fill several American lifetimes. There are no soldiers, like Ludendorff and Pilsudski after the First World War; no adventurers like Mussolini and Hitler. Europe does not want to be ordered, goose-stepped, or even inspired. It wants to be left alone. If one word is required to describe the state of affairs for which Europe yearns, it is the one invented in America a generation ago: "normalcy." Like the country lawyer Coolidge of the 1920's, the country doctor Queuille, until last year Premier of France, found with satisfaction that he could go to sleep every evening and find his nation still carrying on in the morning. Like Coolidge, he saw to it that his government did as little as possible, and proudly earned the title, "The Immobilist," by refusing to take any decision that could possibly be postponed. During his restful year of office, the gold came out of the hiding places where peasants and business men had been keeping it, and France began to look like her old self.

Here and there, political zealots still sound the old trumpets. The Communists doggedly continue to issue their manifestoes, with steadily diminishing response. Nazis and fascists carry on their poisonous propaganda, but find real response only in Austria and Bavaria, where political crackpots are as abundant as mountain lakes and leather breeches. General de Gaulle prates of *"la gloire,"* but French businessmen are satisfied now that they have a Gaullist (i.e. free enterprise and anti-Communist) government without De Gaulle. War-weariness is profound. Even ordinary Germans are showing a welcome lack of interest in having weapons put back into their hands.

The men in power, it should be stressed, are of the constitutional, not the totalitarian, Right. Some members of the Deutsche party, which has a foothold in the Bonn Cabinet, are certainly very close to Nazis. Some Christian Democrats of the far Right harbor a longing for something like the regime of Dollfuss in Austria or the present-day "Estado Novo" in Portugal. But nearly all of the important people—Adenauer, De Gasperi, Bidault, and their chief lieutenants—really believe in parliamentary democracy, and want to make it work. They are patiently seeking to establish the idea—by no means as widely accepted on the Continent as in Britain and America—of responsible governments based on a parliamentary majority, and of responsible oppositions which periodically appeal to the people to support an alternative program. It is a measure of the political distance Europe has to travel that this modest goal has not yet been achieved in France, Italy, or Austria, where the only alternatives to the present regimes are parties of the authoritarian Left or Right.

WHEREAS the parliamentary Left is a virtual monopoly of the Social Democrats, the parliamentary Right is divided into many parties. Of the lesser right-wing factions, the largest is the orthodox conservative, strongly nationalist and having little in the way of program except opposition to all change; France, with its Republican Party of Liberty, provides a good example. Then there are agrarian, separatist, and Protestant parties, as well as those which defy any classification except in terms of personalities. All these represent the most old-fashioned and provincial tendencies in Europe, and rarely play a prominent role in their own countries, let alone on the Continental stage.

It is the Christian Democrats who now provide the heavy battalions of the Right. They have a solid mass base in the Catholic peasantry and in the more devout sections of the urban population, particularly the women. They hold a dominant position in the governments of Western Germany, Italy, Austria, and Belgium, and are the major partners in the French and Dutch coalitions. Through them, the Vatican has more influence on Western European politics than it has exerted at any time since the French Revolution.

The Christian Democratic parties generally contain a left wing, consisting of a small group of high-minded idealists plus Catholic workers identified with their own or with non-denominational unions. The special atmosphere of post-liberation Europe tended to give this left wing a prominence that has not been justified by later events. It was widely hoped by many, for instance, that the cooperation of Social Democrats and left-wing Catholics would provide a progressive majority in Germany. These hopes have been largely unfulfilled. In general, the left-wing leaders of the Catholic parties were only in evidence for the first year or two after V-E Day, while the conservative majority in these parties marked time. By now the leadership has either turned right, as in Italy, or where it has retained some remnants of its radicalism, as in France, it has been deserted by large portions of its following.

It was easy for the Christian Democrats to swim with the tide, paddling left when it was the fashion, and strongly right in recent years, because their real interests have always been rather narrow. They are, in fact, largely confined to protecting the position of the Catholic Church, particularly in the field of education, and to seeing that social reforms are effected at a rate approaching as closely as possible to zero. With some notable exceptions their leadership is of mediocre quality, and in Austria, at least, has been charged with attaining almost Rumanian levels of corruption.

NEXT in importance to the Christian Democrats are the Liberal parties. It must be said immediately that the Continental Liberal has almost nothing in common with that unique political phenomenon, the

American liberal. Liberals in Europe advocate a laissez-faire policy in economics so pure and unadulterated that it would make Senator Taft himself look like a statist; some even doubt whether the construction and maintenance of roads should be entrusted to the government rather than to private enterprise. This doctrine is advanced with the purest of motives and with the accents of intellectual honesty by Liberal professors, whatever the baser attractions it has for European businessmen. It is a doctrine which does not survive even the short passage across the English channel, for British Liberals tend to concede much more to human needs and weaknesses, and have refused to make common cause with the Tories.

There is an obvious difficulty in rallying great numbers of people to such a doctrine, and the result is that the Liberals are rich in ideas and able leaders but weak in mass support. One effect of the bleakness of Liberal party electoral prospects is that people who are Liberals at heart turn up in other parties or as independents. However, the Liberals do enjoy some popular favor, particularly in the business community and among anti-clerical conservatives. In Germany they are recruiting many young intellectuals who are repelled by the priestly politics of the Christian Democrats and the centralized party machine of Herr Schumacher's Socialists. As determined opponents of state power, they benefit from the widespread European revulsion against the burdensome government controls which characterized the immediate postwar period.

THE Christian Democrat-Liberal predominance in government is becoming almost as standard practice as the Christian Democrat-Socialist coalition was a year ago. It prevails in Western Germany and Belgium and has existed off and on in Italy, but there the position of the Christian Democrats is of such overwhelming strength that their partners have no real power. French Liberals (the Radical Socialists and others) join with the MRP in governing France, and have made the position of the Socialists so unhappy that they have withdrawn from the Cabinet.

Whether the Liberal parties play an important role in the cabinet or not, Liberal ideas dominate the economic policy of Continental governments. Nowhere, for example, have Liberal economic principles been applied more rigorously than by Dr. Ludwig Erhardt, nominally a Christian Democrat, in Germany. His deflationary policy is not directed against unemployment and business bankruptcies; on the contrary, it depends upon them for success. Joblessness drives people to the places and industries where they are most needed, and keeps them hard at work once they are there. Bankruptcy puts the high-cost producer out of business, and concentrates manpower and materials in the hands of efficient managements. The effect of Dr. Erhardt's policy on the once-stagnant German economy was at first electric, whatever the social injustices it has involved, and he could claim from the election results that the people approved it. Recently, even American authorities in Germany have begun to suspect that he has gone too far.

Similar policies are being applied over the Continent generally. There is nothing that gives the true European Liberal more solid satisfaction than the hardness of his currency, and he is already boasting that his cherished Swiss and Belgian francs will be joined, in standing up to the dollar, by the French franc, the Italian lira, and the West German mark, while the welfare-softened English pound is still limping along on exchange controls.

The pattern of government in Europe is thus becoming one in which Liberals provide most of the ideas, Christian Democrats most of the votes. To some extent, their qualities and defects are complementary. Liberal government by itself might, in its fanatic devotion to economic principles, be somewhat lacking in humanity. The Christian Democrats recognize higher principles than economic ones, but by themselves they might slide gradually into some form of clerical authoritarian regime; this is still not outside the realm of possibility in Italy, where the Liberals are weak, and in Austria, where they do not exist as a party.

Like the America of a generation ago, Europe today faces a second industrial revolution. Simplification and modernization are the watchwords; the assembly line of mass production must replace the craftsman at his bench. These drastic changes, great alike in their cost in human hardship and their ultimate dividends in multiplied output, took place in America at a time when the trade union movement was weak and the government in power sought to interfere as little as possible with the businessman. It can be argued that these circumstances greatly aided the transformation, by giving the entrepreneur almost complete freedom of action.

In any case, it is interesting to note that conditions in Europe of today are very similar; the trade unions of Germany, France, and Italy are pathetically weak even in the industrial field, while the political influence of the Continental labor movement generally is at a low ebb. If European businessmen fail to take advantage of this opportunity, they have only themselves to blame.

In this undertaking, of course, American aid will be essential. Here the European Right has a double advantage over the Left. The first is that the private American investor will be much more disposed to put his money into an economy run for the sake of successful free enterprise, than into one of high wages and imminent nationalization. The second is the much greater enthusiasm which the Right can show in seeking and receiving aid from Wall Street: the Left hardly ever avoids embarrassment and a certain awkwardness in this. It is the rightists who are the ardent and unabashed admirers of the American way of life. So notorious for this is such a European Liberal as René Mayer, for instance, that when he was talked of as premier of France, parliamentary wits coined the slogan "The *Reader's Digest* to power!"

The Christian Democrats and the Liberals, especially the latter, may also have an advantage over the Left in moving towards European unity. Internationalists in theory, Socialists are, in practice, often drawn towards economic nationalism by the desire of their trade union supporters to protect high wages and full employment. It is significant that Scandinavian and British Socialists, with their intimate connection with the trade unions, are the most stubborn opponents of European integration, while the French Socialists, whose connection with the trade unions is much more remote, work closely with Liberals like Reynaud on this issue. Orthodox conservatives are also opposed to unity, because of their strong nationalist bias; but the Christian Democrats have a common allegiance to Rome and a common antagonism to the Kremlin that surmount national boundaries. As for the European Liberal, everything about European integration attracts him. Freedom of migration and trade and interchangeability of currencies delight him, as does international competition with its concentrating of the production of each item where costs are lowest. Since he is not afraid of causing unemployment and bankruptcy by the policy he follows nationally, similar results from international integration do not frighten him. So far, at least, go the Liberal professors and writers; the politicians, and even more the business men, may stop some distance short of this icy perfection!

These policies were much easier to put into effect in the 19th century, when workers took unemployment as something inevitable and impersonal like winter and death. Now that they join the Communist party instead, things are much more difficult. The true Liberal blames this on the two World Wars, which have badly damaged the marvelous but delicate apparatus of international economic liberalism. In his desire to return to the 19th century, he is not alone; Central Europeans of every political persuasion except the Communist confess more and more to a nostalgia for the days of the Hapsburgs, and not all of them hasten to add, "Economically, I mean."

Time cannot be reversed, however, and the existence and undoubted attractions of communism make all the more desirable the presence of a strong democratic Left in Europe.

Constitutional government in Europe cannot be safe until there exists everywhere a constitutional Left comparable in strength to the Right which is now in power, and capable of governing in its place when the tide of public opinion turns again. It is only fair to note that far-sighted conservatives like De Gasperi and Adenauer fully recognize this.

So far, however, Continental Socialists have not succeeded in attracting the support of more than a third or so of the voters. By jettisoning Marxism, the Socialist parties of the British Commonwealth and of Scandinavia have succeeded in obtaining a parliamentary majority. In the more difficult circumstances of the Continent, even this may not be sufficient. It may be necessary to drop the label of socialism itself.

Strange as it may seem, the real need is for the European equivalent of our own Democratic party—one that will attract enough different groups (and particularly lower-income Catholics) who are adversely affected by Liberal economics to secure a parliamentary majority, and whose program of reform will be moderate enough to be capable of being carried out under conditions of community self-discipline rather less ideal than those of Britain and Scandinavia. In Germany the chance for some such development exists in the trade union movement, which since the war has been organized on an all-inclusive basis and has in some respects taken a sounder and more sensible political line than the Schumacher Socialists. In Italy there has been interest among right-wing Socialists, Republicans, and left-wing Liberals in forming a united progressive and anti-clerical front. But as yet there is in Europe no movement of any substance in this direction.

In the meantime, if only by default, the constitutional Right is likely to remain in power so long as American aid averts economic disaster. But should the constitutional Right lack for long the counterweight of a constitutional Left, there is real danger that in desperation the working class will turn to the Communists, and the lower middle classes to demagogues of the totalitarian Right.

Israeli Ties and U.S. Citizenship: I

AMERICA DEMANDS A SINGLE LOYALTY

The Perils of a "Favorite" Foreign Nation

DOROTHY THOMPSON

THERE exists a famous American document to which reference is often made, but which few people read. It says: "Nothing is more essential [to this country] than that permanent inveterate antipathies against particular foreign nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded.... The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. ... Sympathy for the favorite [foreign] nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest where no real common interest exists... leads to concessions to the favorite nation and privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions ... and it gives corrupted or deluded citizens, who devote themselves to the favorite nation, facilities to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country without odium, sometimes, even, with popularity, gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation ... the base or foolish compliances of . . . infatuation."

AMONG those who have expressed concern lest the strong emotional attachment that American Zionists have exhibited for Israel cast suspicion on the loyalty of American Jews to the United States, DOROTHY THOMPSON's has been an especially outspoken voice. She states here the case for this viewpoint, which has won its passionate advocates and aroused equally passionate denials. (Immediately following this article, OSCAR HANDLIN presents an alternative, opposing view of the problem raised by Miss Thompson.) Miss Thompson was in the years preceding World War II one of our leading foreign correspondents, and one of the first to warn of the dangers of the rising Nazi regime; during the postwar years her column, appearing in many leading newspapers throughout the country, has won wide influence; and she is a well-known figure on lecture platforms.

These words are from Washington's "Farewell Address," and they have hitherto, for the most part, guided American policy towards all nations. Ours has been a policy of equal and reciprocal friendship. If friendships have lapsed it has been because of conflict of interest between other nations and our own, and not because of "inveterate antipathies" or "passionate attachments" to any other nation or nations *per se*.

For no nation was Washington's advice more pertinent than ours. As our country developed, the wisdom of this advice has increased rather than diminished. For the United States has drawn its nationals from other nations, with the concomitant danger that these might transfer to this nation the "inveterate antipathies" or "passionate attachments" of their former nation and so destroy the Republic by internal divisions of loyalty.

FROM the outset the United States repudiated the idea of a multi-national state—and this point is the main theme of this article. We are a union of American states; we are not a union of European nations or nationals. Each immigrant to these shores came as an individual, prepared to cast off his former nationhood and enter with good faith into a new nationhood, as well as a new statehood. Here, unlike the Soviet Union or the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, nationhood and statehood are conjoined.

It is very important that we keep this basic fact clear. The citizen of the Soviet Union (like the citizen of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire) retains a nationality within a multi-national state. He may be a

Ukrainian, speaking the Ukrainian language, or an Uzbek, speaking the Uzbek language, within a state embracing more than a hundred and fifty other nationalities with as many languages, and with schools and courts in all of them.

However, the nationalities of the Soviet Union, like those of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, were indigenous on the soil the state embraced. The state found them there, as long-settled and cohesive nationalities, and incorporated them together under a single central government.

It is from these East European areas, where state and nation have not meant the same thing, that we have derived the concept of the national "minority."

The concept of national "minorities" arose within multi-national states. National "minorities" were cohesive ethnic groups within a state, with a sense of nationhood, who were denied, or who felt they did not enjoy, equal status with the dominant nationalities comprising the state of their citizenship. The Slavs, for instance, of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire felt they were denied equality of national status with the Germans and the Magyars, and out of this revolt against "minority" status rose the conflict that ended the Empire—and, incidentally, started new conflicts within its successors. Ethnic groups differing from the dominant body demanded "national" rights as "national minorities," including the right to set up a state or other autonomy of their own. Such were Croatians, in the early Yugoslav monarchy, who denied they shared nationality with the Serbs; the Austro-Germans in the Czech Sudeten; the Slovaks, in the Czechoslovak Republic; the Ukrainians in pre-war Poland; repeatedly, the Ukrainians in Russia; and the Jews in all these states as well.

Such a concept never has been, and never could be accepted by the United States, nor are the cases parallel. For the American nation was created by the voluntary transfer of persons from another soil to this, not by federation or conquest of nations on their original soil.

The United States is a nation and a state originally created by British colonists in a primeval country inhabited only by a sparse population of tribally organized aborigines whom the white settlers gradually displaced. The act of creating the United States included a total break of the then almost purely Anglo-Saxon American people from their mother country. In the break, they created a new nation as well as a new state. We were an American "people" from the time the Constitution opened with the words, "We, the people," to and beyond the time when Abraham Lincoln described "a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

It may seem the utmost banality to reaffirm a proposition so obvious. But that it needs reaffirming is indicated by the way the concept of American "minorities" has crept into the American language. It must here be stated: *There are no minorities in the United States.* There are no national minorities, racial minorities, or religious minorities. The whole concept and basis of the United States precludes them. That our culture—and race—has long since ceased to be wholly "Anglo-Saxon"; that America is a blended amalgam of many races and cultures does not change this fact. American democracy is based on equality of right for every individual citizen and religious group, with neither inherent rights nor inherent prejudices for or against any national groups —which are simply not recognized.

Every citizen of the United States and member of the American nation who was not born here came voluntarily as an individual, with one exception—the Negroes whose ancestors were imported as chattel slaves. Each member of this nation possesses his nationhood and his citizenship with equality of right and equality of obligation with every other citizen. Where, or if, his status, or the status of a group to which he belongs, is prejudiced, he has the right, personally and as a member of the group, to fight for the equalization of his status, as in the case of the Negro. But he cannot fight for the recognition of a different national status, or a status of "minority," for no such status is constitutionally recognized or recognizable. We are "one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Unless this identity of American nation and state is upheld as primary, this nation will not survive. From the beginning, the creation of the American nation was a hazardous experiment. For were a Polish, British, Czech, German, or other European nation to transplant itself in a national bloc to this soil, without a clear break of former nationhood by every individual, one of two things would eventually happen: either the country would split into contending national groups, or its policies would become subject to other states using their nationals here for the purposes of the parent nation-state.

The danger of this has always been recognized by the national instinct, expressing itself in abhorrence of "hyphenates"; symbolized in the naturalization processes; expressed in the law that citizenship can be withdrawn if a naturalized citizen returns to his native country for more than two years without satisfactory explanation; in such rituals as the Oath to the Flag; in the hatred of communism, far less for its social and economic theories than for its acceptance of the Soviet Union as the "workers' fatherland"; and in the immediate revolt against the German-American Bund, claiming national allegiance from Americans of German origin.

Frenchmen, Englishmen, and other Europeans find some of these expressions of American nationalism naive and exaggerated. But Englishmen and Frenchmen have never had to ask themselves what it means to be English or French. With the exception of a few naturalized citizens, that is the way they all were born; that is what their ancestors were. Our country, alone in the whole world, is composed of persons a majority of whose ancestors originally had other nationalities. Hence the perpetual emphasis has been upon assimilation. All public schools are conducted in one tongue; political life divides the population into parties, not ethnic groups; all religions are accorded equal rights and none is given state favoritism.

Nevertheless, repeatedly in our history, dangers have arisen to the American nation by reason of a recrudescence of former loyalties and the transmission of inter-European interests to their American descendants. Americans of Irish origin have been anti-British for no American reasons; Americans of Polish origin have been anti-Russian and anti-German for no American reasons, etc. It was precisely this danger that Woodrow Wilson warned against, on May 10, 1915, when he said:

"You cannot become true Americans if you think of yourselves in groups. America does not consist of groups. A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become American, and the man who goes among you to trade upon your nationality is not worthy to live under the Stars and Stripes."

And on occasion, fear of these other, former loyalties has led to harsh measures, often unjust, especially in time of war—to persecution of Americans of German origin, for instance, and, in the last war, to the very un-American treatment accorded the Nisei. For it is recognized as hard, in nature, to relinquish one nationality for another, and even harder in one or two generations to cut ties of peculiar sympathy with a former motherland.

But with all the latent conflicts that could arise from the diversity of American national origins, America was aided by the recognition of other states that they had permanently lost their former nationals when they became American. The single exception was Hitler's claim to Americans of German descent, which provoked so drastic a national reaction, and temporarily prejudiced the status of all Americans of German ancestry.

On the whole it was easy for European countries to relinquish their nationals. Europe, since the industrial revolution, has suffered from over-population; the export of part of its population was a boon, as it would be today to certain countries, notably Italy; European nations wanted to keep the good will of America as a rising powerful state, and also to keep open the American gates. Bismarck, much wiser than Hitler, fought the idea of a "Union of Germans Abroad," on the ground that it would prejudice in other countries the case of Germany herself; and at the outbreak of World War II, the Polish Ambassador to the United States, Jan Ciechanowski, addressing Americans of Polish descent while Poland was being overrun by German armies, had the wisdom and tact to remind his hearers that, although they were bound in natural sympathy to the citizens of their former nation, they must remember that they were not Poles but Americans.

In the growth of the American nation, the Jews joined the great stream of immigrants from Europe, not as Jews, but as Poles, Russians, Austrians, Hungarians, or other nationals, arriving here not to transplant their national allegiances, but to shake them off for a new one. When immigration was restricted and the quota system adopted, Jews shared the quotas assigned to the various European nationals—and still do. Jewish immigration was large. Especially in Eastern Europe, where the Jews held a peculiar status of second-class citizenship, and of a religious and quasi-national minority, their eagerness to acquire a first-class citizenship and equal status was strong. Hence it happened that eventually a third of all the Jews in the world found residence and citizenship in the United States, and with Hitler's extermination of the Jews in Europe, American Jews formed half the number of all Jews, which is the present situation.

In general, and in the past, Jewish immigrants, particularly those from East European countries, were most free of prejudices arising from their former national and state allegiances. Where they had such, they were the prejudices of their co-nationals of other religions. But even so, they had fewer such prejudices. Their ghetto life in pre-revolutionary Russia and Poland had not inclined them to Russian or Polish chauvinism, and in all ways except religion they assimilated rapidly and enthusiastically.

The growth and expansion of Zionism, however, raised, for the first time among the Jewish and non-Jewish populations of Western states, the question of whether a Jew was a person adhering to the religion of Judaism or whether he was a member of a separate nation and chiefly set off from others by this latter fact.

There is no question that the sense of nationhood had always been latent in Orthodox Jewry. The Old Testament is both the source of Jewish religious inspiration and the secular history of a specific people, the twelve tribes that many centuries ago constituted the "nation" of Israel. A few of the religious festivals of Judaism recount the national trials of the Jews and might be interpreted to express national aspirations.

Also, in the face of medieval persecutions, European Jews extended their own religious law codes, with which they governed not only the religious life of Jewish communities but, to an extent, their secular life as well. These theocratic arrangements which governed the medieval European ghettos passed over in part to the modern ghettos, and were even cherished by East European Jews as evidence of their separate religious and secular existence.

But at the end of the 18th century Moses Mendelssohn in Germany, under the influence of the ideas of the Enlightenment, began the reformation of Judaism, to emphasize the spiritual revelations of the prophets rather than the rituals and habits of mind of a nation in exile. He translated the Bible, read by the Jews in Hebrew, into German. (Orthodox Jews burned the translation!)

Nevertheless, the movement of the Enlightenment, for the purpose of making Judaism entirely a religious faith compatible with any nationality, and for the reception of Jews into equal status as nationals of the countries where they lived, extended itself to all of Western Europe during the 19th century. In America, a country cut loose at birth from much unhappy history, in which the Jews breathed perhaps the greatest freedom they had known since the fall of the Jewish state, further reforms made headway under the leadership of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise. These Reform Jews looked upon the Zion of the Bible and the Prayer Book symbolically, as the aspiration of those who would found on the principles of Moses, Isaiah, Amos, and Jeremiah, the *Civitas Dei* —the City of God—wherever they might be. Their Jerusalem hardly differed from the "Holy City," "The Golden," "Of milk and honey Blest" of the Protestant Christians, for whom it was, and is, symbol of a redeemed society, wherever on earth that society may be.

But nearly half a century after Moses Mendelssohn had begun his work, Theodor Herzl, a Viennese Jew, started the Zionist movement, to return the Jews to Palestine and establish there a state. This movement was entirely secular and political. Herzl's impulse was not the religious Zionism of Orthodoxy. As a journalist, writing for the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, he had covered the Dreyfus Affair in France, and by it had been impelled to the belief that there was no permanent hope for the assimilation of Jews anywhere in Europe.

I FIND it of the highest historical importance that the Zionist movement thus originated in the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the one country historically belonging to Europe which was not a nation-state but a multi-national state, doomed even in Herzl's time to break up by reason of the nationalism of its component elements.

For although Jewish nationalism, or Zionism, does, to be sure, differ in one important essential from the nationalist movements of the last and present century in Eastern Europe, it is practically identical with them in others. It is unique in the fact that it is the movement of a people considering themselves displaced for millennia from their national soil. It was not, therefore, a movement of people to attain self-government and national status on the soil where it was living, but to attain it on a far distant soil, where few of them or their ancestors had lived for centuries. This is what makes it different from the other East European national movements. Otherwise, Zionism was a not atypical East European movement, arising in lands where various nationalities had varying status within multi-national states such as Russia, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Jewish movement for national freedom and independence could be compared, without stretching the analogy excessively, to movements among the Ukrainians in Poland and Russia, and the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, etc., in Austro-Hungary. And just as these movements found support from former nationals elsewhere in the world, so Zionism found similar support. Until Hitler, it was preeminently a movement of and for such Jews as had no satisfactory or equal status in the countries where they lived.

The Zionist movement, however, received its most powerful impetus and opportunity from the rise to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany.

Prior to Hitler the Jewish colonization of Palestine was a problem rather of finding sufficient settlers than of dealing with the pressure of vast homeless masses. The number of Jews from the West who joined the *halutzim* and other settlement groups was negligible. Although militant Jewish nationalism was always a part of the Zionist movement, its supporters in the West tended rather to regard it as a relief measure for their less fortunate co-religionists in Eastern Europe.

However, when Germany, the cradle of Jewish emancipation, turned against the Jews a shock was delivered to the Jewish mind and soul such as it had hardly received in its millennial history. It was all that was needed to fan into white heat the Jewish nationalism which the Zionist movement had never previously succeeded in doing more than spark. The fear that had overcome Theodor Herzl at the end of the last century in France was nothing compared to the terror that gripped the hearts of Jews throughout the world, as in the midst of a Western and theoretically advanced civilization Jews were first reduced to second- and third-rate status; branded to the fourth and fifth generations, regardless of intermarriage or religious conversion; and eventually systematically subjected to extermination in every European country occupied by the German armies.

It was thus not the Jews, not even the Zionists, who gave the greatest impetus to Jewish nationalism. It was Hitler, the Germans, and the whole Gentile world, who failed to come with anything like adequate energy to their relief.

But it is also one of the bitter ironies of history and human psychology that we tend to accept the theses of those we hate. It was Hitler's violent and exaggerated nationalism, his concept of the Germans as a separate, persecuted, and superior people, his idea of the eternal identity of race, nation, and state, his identification, furthermore, of nation and religion—in his attempt, for instance, to make a specifically German and exclusive Christianity—all of which ideas were latent and slumbering in the German subconscious and, for that matter, are probably in some measure latent and slumbering in the subconscious of many other peoples—that resulted in the violent persecution of the Jews.

One would have thought—though the thought would have been superficial, leaving out of account the peculiarities of human psychology—that the reaction of the world, and especially of the Jews, to the unprecedented horrors released by such concepts would have been to repudiate all such ideas for all time. Unfortunately, human emotions do not follow the dictates of reason. Among millions of Jews the reaction to the German action was to release a counter-nationalism of unprecedented vehemence, bearing in some of the more radical Zionist groups such as the Irgunists and Sternists a striking resemblance to Hitler's own concepts and working itself out—again by one of those strange historical ironies—not against the Germans but against the nation which had made the greatest sacrifices to destroy the enemy of the Jews—Great Britain—and which, also, had been the first country to accept the original Zionist idea.

But it is not my purpose to go into such phases of Zionist phenomena. Who would do so enters the dark regions of the soul and the reactions of despair, in which the terrorized become terrorists, the victims of genomania become genomaniacal, a man like Arthur Koestler creates his own "darkness at noon," and anyone who dares to raise however timid a voice of warning in an attempt to break a circle of action and reaction which has many of the aspects of hell itself is charged as an anti-Semite. These things, too, it seems to me, could have been expected as the result of the Hitler horror. They did not start with the Jews and it ill becomes a non-Jew to assume any attitude of righteousness, however deeply and sadly one may deplore them.

But there is an aspect of Zionism which demands clear facing by Jews and Gentiles alike. And that concerns the relation of the American who recognizes himself as a Jew to the nation of his citizenship, and to the nation-state of Israel. Both among Jews and Gentiles there is a sort of open conspiracy not to face this question—or at least not to face it publicly. I believe that this timidity is extremely dangerous—dangerous, in the first line, to the Jews. For it is being discussed very vehemently in private, both among Jews and Gentiles.

Israel is not the first state in the world to be created by colonization. But it is, I think, the first state in human history to be created by the emigration of a non-recognized "nation" to a non-existent state of that nation. Colonization in every other historic case was from an existing state to a colony of that state or a territory desired as a colony—after which the colony often broke away to independent existence. In creating the State of Israel, however, the process has been reversed. A hitherto legally non-existent *nation*—the Jewish—has created a nation-state, and not by members of the nation resident within the geographical confines of the state but by members of the nation who were actually citizens of other states yet were successfully urged to regard themselves, at the same time, as in some way nationals of a state in process of creation.

The question, now, of what will be the future relation of an international "nation" —if we accept the Zionist thesis—that created the nation-state of Israel to this, its offspring, is unavoidable. Shall "World Jewry" outside Israel, citizens of many nations but above all concentrated in the United States, regard itself in some manner as "Israel-in-Exile"? Is what the Zionists themselves always call "World Jewry" a continuing part of the Jewish nation? And if this is so, what is bound to be the reaction eventually of the states of their citizenship, and especially the reaction of the United States, where reside half the Jews of the earth?

The American of Jewish religion has always been, and as long as this nation holds to its basic and Constitutional principles will always be, accepted as a full and equal citizen. But sooner or later the Jewish nationalist, which today means the Israeli nationalist, will have to choose allegiancies. "One cannot," says an old Jewish proverb, "sit on one chair at two weddings." There is no room in American nationality for two citizenships or two nationalities. To say it extremely brutally: no one can be a member of the American nation and of the Jewish nation—in Palestine or out of it—any more than he can be a member of the American nation and the British or German nation. In this country nationhood goes with statehood. No one should interfere with the choice but sooner or later the choice will have to be made.

MANY years ago a distinguished Zionist presented me with what seemed a very telling argument in favor of a Jewish state. "Thousands of Jews," he argued, "have within themselves a deep sense of separate nationality. Being stateless, each Jew is compelled to carry this sense around with him, guarding it in his own bosom and feeling treasonable if he drops it. Once given an established state, this feeling will fade away. The Jewish nation-state will be a specific place and thing, and the individual Jew can give up this harassing sense of vague nationality and make a free choice."

Were that to be true, the establishment of the State of Israel might bring a real emancipation to the Jews throughout the world who feel themselves clearly to be Frenchmen, Britons, Americans, and what not, differing from their fellow-nationals if at all only in matters of religion. One could assume that a natural sympathy would exist between Jews everywhere and the State of Israel, as a natural sympathy exists between Americans of various national origins and the countries of their ancestry, not strong enough, however, to influence their behavior where interests might be in conflict. But, unfortunately, certain tendencies in Zionism do not point in this direction. On the contrary, if the words of some Zionists are to be taken at face value, Zionism conceives of every Jew in the world as belonging to the Jewish "nation," and to a sort of Diaspora of the State of Israel. There is traceable in the United States an increasing wish to separate Jewish cultural existence here from the main stream of American life—this apart from the Jewish religious community—and to set up among American Jews a quasi-secular community. There are already Jewish community councils that try to discipline Jews as though they were members of a separate minority group within the United States. In specifically Jewish publications I have read of such ceremonies as American Jewish children taking oaths to the Star of David flag, which is not, as a flag, a religious symbol but the banner of a state like any other secular state. There are in this country pioneer camps where native-born American children and youth are training for Palestine —training, indeed, to become citizens and soldiers of another state. And on August 31 in Tel Aviv, Israel's Prime Minister, Mr. Ben Gurion, was quoted as saying: "Although we realized our dream of establishing a Jewish state, we are still at the beginning. Today there are only 900,000 Jews in Israel while the greater part of the Jewish people is still abroad. Our next task will not be easier than the creation of a Jewish state. It consists of bringing all the Jews to Israel.

"We appeal chiefly to the youth in the United States. . . . Even if [their parents] decline to help we will bring the youth to Israel."

Now such camps and such statements, unrepudiated by the American Zionist organizations, perturb me. Training camps for Palestine existed in Eastern Europe under the friendly aegis of East European governments. But they were tolerated because these countries wished to reduce what were, in their terms, cohesive Jewish minorities, and therefore favored their emigration to Palestine—or for that matter to any other place that would receive them. To say it bluntly, these countries wanted to get rid of Jews. Are we to assume that the same reasons lie behind American tolerance of such training camps? And if the half-conscious wish to reduce the Jewish population here does not lie behind the tolerance, what does? What other conceivable reason could make such camps and such a concept as Ben Gurion's acceptable? And how does one equate the desire of European Jews to emigrate to the United States under various quotas, with Jewish exhortations within the United States for American Jews to go to Israel? And, finally, if all the Jews of the world are to have an actual or potential home in Israel, what extended encroachments on the Arab world are implied?

THE claim that every Jew in the world is, by his very existence, a member of the Jewish "nation," from which he cannot and may not extricate himself, is a claim never before made, to my recollection, by anybody except anti-Semites. Some of us non-Jews have spent a great part of our lives arguing against anti-Semites that the Jews are not a separate and specific "people," or "nation," or "race" held together within other states by a kind of secret nationhood, and many of us who have supported Zionism have done so on the ground that a Jewish nation-state would tend to end the Diaspora idea, and thus clarify this anti-Semitic suspicion once and for all, by making it possible to say: There, in Palestine, is the Jewish state and nation—there and *nowhere else*.

But this is not the attitude being taken by certain Zionists, who refer over and over again to "World Jewry" as an integral part of the Jewish *nation* with unceasing and perpetual obligations to the Jewish national state—obligations which are not, incidentally, reciprocal. For although, in the official Zionist view, no Jew in the world may be neutral toward Israel, Israel itself has declared a policy of neutrality between Russia and the West at a time of utmost crisis for our civilization. And this, despite the fact that Russia is persecuting Zionism and Jewish Americans have largely financed Israel.

The idea that the world Zionist movement is under the political discipline of the state it has created was expressed in *New Palestine,* June 11, 1948: "From the minute the Jewish State was proclaimed we [Jews abroad] are constrained from taking any political action in regard to Israel without the approval of the Jewish State."

I am sure also, that I do not know what is going to happen to the Jewish religion if it becomes increasingly subservient to political Zionism. Only the other day, the Scriptural verse, "If I forget Thee, oh Jerusalem," was invoked throughout this nation in behalf of a purely political solution of the status of that city. We Christians also pray the same exhortation, "If I forget Thee," associating Jerusalem with the Holy Land of prophecy for peace and good will among all men. In Christian terms, to politicize this concept would be to revive the Crusades to wrest the city from the hands of the infidel! Terrible dangers lie in such politicizing and secularizing of a religion to the purposes of state power. The history of Christianity is full of examples: Jews can learn from the errors of other religions; the equating of politics and religion has always been unfortunate, and must by its nature widen the gap between the religions here in our own country.

There is another aspect of present-day Zionist propaganda which disturbs me. That is an effort to recreate in American Jews Herzl's anxiety and to deepen the anxiety neurosis in them. American Jews are being indoctrinated by some Zionists with the idea that they exist in this country—as everywhere else outside Israel—on dubious sufferance, and that what happened in Germany could happen here any minute.

Now, God knows, a Jewish anxiety neurosis is understandable after the events of this decade in Europe. But I often think that every person who attempts to lead states, nations, and people should have to make a study of analytical psychology. For when a fear takes possession of the mind, the pattern of behavior becomes self-defeating and of such a nature as to make the realization of the fear more likely. *We bring on what we fear.* Any psychologist will tell you that a primary neurosis is the fear of rejection and that when that neurosis takes hold of a person he unconsciously strives to create the conditions for that rejection.

I find no analogy between the outbreak in Hitler's Germany and the danger in this country. Racialism has been a European disease for centuries, and no part of Europe has ever had the kind of equal democracy of this country. The racially polyglot nature of the United States makes outbursts of racialism highly dangerous to far more than Jewish Americans. The Negroes are, as I have said, unique because their original status was unique. They were not originally admitted to this country as citizens but as slaves, and out of that original sin and crime has come all the malaise and strain that has marked the relations between blacks and whites. Yet it is my faith that this problem too will ultimately solve itself in the only American way, namely, by gradual racial assimilation and more rapid recognition of equality of personal rights.

Every Jew in America should have faith in this, for himself and for others. What the Jews here and everywhere else need today, as rarely in their history, is not discouragement but encouragement, not the instilment of perpetual fear but of confident faith in the American brotherhood; not the conviction that the American dream is going to break down in a horrible pogrom, but that it will triumphantly outride every storm.

We who are Gentiles have much to do to help adjustments between the various types and ancestries that make up our country. I myself, for instance, have throughout my public life fought such silly, un-American, and self-defeating measures as hotel restrictions, residential restrictions, and quotas in private schools. But one is not aided in this if from any group comes a perpetual affirmation of their essential separateness, and affirmation of the conviction that they are apparently appointed by destiny to perpetual persecution. I believe myself that even the continual beating of the drums of anti-anti-Semitism can be, and has been, overdone. Again, I believe it is psychologically false. Prejudice is apparently so integral a part of human nature that we can hardly expect ever to see it wholly eliminated socially, and if I may say so, it is not entirely confined to the Gentile world. But the plain fact of the matter is that for millions of Jews this country is their Zion, their home, and the representative of their democratic faith. And anyone who tends to break down that fact and faith is not the friend of either the United States or the Jews.

In addition to this fear being engendered among Jews there is another tendency equally dangerous as it affects non-Jews, and that is to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. This really amounts to making anti-Semites, by appointment, of everybody who either does not believe in Zionism or criticizes any phase of Zionist and Israeli policy. Israel is a state whose policies and interests must conflict at certain points with the interests and policies of other states; it is a state run like all others by fallible men whose policies are open to criticism; and it is also, like other states, one within which there are conflicting tendencies and conflicting policies and parties, some of which may awaken admiration and others distaste, not at all by reason of race or religion, but by reason of the policy itself. Yet—and I speak from very unhappy experience—we are in a frame of mind and a condition of affairs in this country where to make any criticism of any policy or party in Israel is equated, by Zionist leaders and apologists, with anti-Semitism, with, as a result, a highly strained and by no means healthy condition in the press. I thought, for instance, that the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte and his aide was a dreadful thing; that the failure of the Israeli government to apprehend the culprits was scandalous; that the immense reception accorded to the Irgunist leader Beigin in New York was out of place; and that some acts of Israeli terrorists against Arabs were shameful. I made these criticisms in good faith but also, as I learned, in most naive innocence, for by making them I called down upon my head a campaign of vilification such as it has seldom been my lot to endure; a huge letter-writing campaign to newspapers demanding that my column be dropped and charging me, of all things, with being an anti-Semite, as though being anti-Irgun or anti-Stern Group or—for that matter—anti-Zionist was synonymous with being against Jews *per se*.

Nothing, to my mind, could be worse. The State of Israel will, in my opinion, be infinitely stronger in world public opinion when journalists and commentators are given no cause to fear treating it with the same forthrightness that they treat other states and their policies. I say this in full knowledge that young and weak states and governments are always more sensitive than established and strong ones, and I say it in the ardent and absolutely sincere hope that Israel will flourish and give expression to the deepest moral instincts and intellectual gifts of the Jewish religion and of Jewish cultural possibilities.

But the Zionists should, I think, realize the truth in the words of Emerson that "a friend is a person with whom one can be sincere." The terrorization of criticism is not, in my experience, characteristically Jewish at all, but quite the contrary; and when any people embark upon a political road they embark upon a controversial road, controversial in essence, in the nature of the act itself.

I have found the courage to write some of these things because I know that thousands of American Jews feel them equally or more strongly than myself, including Jews who have been and are in the Zionist movement, and those others who, though accused of being "traitors to their people," have rejected Zionism. And it is my hope—though not my expectation—that those who read my words will accept them exactly in the spirit in which they are meant—uttered by one who, far from rejecting the American Jews or the State of Israel, wants to see American Jews wholly American, free and equal members of the American nation and no other, and Israel's Jews Israelis, creating the nation they have dreamed of in peace with all their neighbors and with all mankind.

Israeli Ties and U.S. Citizenship: II

AMERICA RECOGNIZES DIVERSE LOYALTIES

"External" Ties Are Not Necessarily Dangerous

OSCAR HANDLIN

DOROTHY THOMPSON'S fears are groundless. But they are nevertheless real for her and apparently of enough currency among others to call for serious discussion. However benevolent her intention, I think her argument misleading —dangerously so. But it ought not be shrugged aside without examination: honest errors are capable of rational correction.

"America Demands a Single Loyalty" is written as if it were directed to Jews alone. But the issues she raises are of far more general concern; all Americans have a stake in this problem. It is not so much the complexity of the Jewish situation that leads Miss Thompson astray. Her mistakes spring rather from fundamentally false assumptions as to the nature of foreign policy in a democracy and as to the quality of American society.

We shall not understand the wrong turnings her thought has taken without first examining the process by which foreign policy is established in this country and the general role in American life of organized ethnic groups.

INTERNATIONAL relations complicate the functioning of a democratic government. In this area, the usual modes of arriving at policy are difficult to apply. Here the democratic society has contact with unequals, that is, with societies which are not democracies and in which the accepted canons of open discussion in the forum of public opinion do not apply. Early in the life of the American republic, its statesmen discovered that negotiations with monarchs and aristocratic bureaucrats involved them in dealings the conditions and terms of which were often not democratic. As late as the First World War, Woodrow Wilson voiced the popular resentment against the green-table diplomats and, in conscious protest, still called for open diplomacy openly arrived at. But we have had gradually to recognize the tradition of secrecy. This tradition is in essence antidemocratic because it involves the concealing of facts from the people within, as well as the foreign power without.

Furthermore, from the start, Americans recognized that decisions of foreign policy were, in their nature, graver than internal decisions. Domestic measures taken in the name of the people can be later reversed by the people. A law once passed can be repealed by the same body that enacted it; even the constitutions of the state and federal governments can be amended by a regular process. But in foreign policy, the people cannot retrace their steps; agreements involve parties outside the nation and, to that extent, abrogate its freedom of action.

OSCAR HANDLIN writes as an American historian whose studies have been focussed on the various groups that make up America and their relation to the common society and to government policy, foreign and domestic. He here examines, in the light of American experience and present facts, the fears expressed by Dorothy Thompson in the preceding article, and offers a sharply differing view. Mr. Handlin is associate professor of history at Harvard University. He is the author of *Boston's Immigrants* (1941), *The Immigrant in American Politics* (1944), *Commonwealth* (1946), "A Century of Jewish Immigration" in Volume 50 of the *American Jewish Year Book*, and is the editor of *This Was America* (1949). His last article in COMMENTARY was "Group Life Within the American Pattern" (November 1949).

These peculiar characteristics have produced the view that the diplomacy of a nation is a case unto itself and must be treated in a special way. The federal Constitution recognizes that peculiarity by setting up procedures for the ratification of treaties different from those for the enactment of statutes. American law also admits a somewhat wider latitude to the executive in external than in internal affairs.

But while acknowledging the peculiarities of diplomacy, the American people never accepted the view that it should be significantly free of democratic control. The Constitution defines treason very rigidly and very narrowly. The provisions with regard to secrecy are recent and largely the products of war emergency. The main line of American thought has recognized that foreign, like domestic, policy could produce *legitimate differences of opinion, and that the most effective way of resolving those differences is through open debate.*

The contrary opinion, that there is a single "national interest" not subject to determination by the ordinary rules of politics, has always been defeated. A century and a half ago, a rabid minority in the Federalist party, eager to push the country into a war with France, secured the enactment of the ill-omened Logan Act which forbade a private citizen to enter into conversations with a foreign government outside the regular diplomatic channels. But the consequence was a decisive test of popular opinion. For the act was never applied and was one of the significant factors responsible for the defeat and ultimate disappearance of the Federalist party.

Since that time few statesmen have ventured openly to deny that *individuals and groups had a direct interest in foreign policy and could legitimately use every means to shape it.* Those who have denied that proportion, under the guise of some mystique of "national interest," have generally done so to cloak their own personal interests, as a way of reaching decisions ***in camera*** and outside the light of public debate.

Thus, although the mechanism has sometimes been different, our foreign policies, with few exceptions, have been determined in the same way as our domestic policies, through the clash of interests and ideas. The United States has never been homogeneous as to the social and economic composition of its whole population, as to their intellectual backgrounds, their cultural allegiances, or the nature of their perspectives on the world position of the country. *The "national interest" was never revealed as an ideal above and beyond all the individuals in the nation.* It was rather discovered by realistic compromise achieved through free discussion and open exposition of all the diversities of opinion and interest involved.

PUBLIC pressures on the formulation of policy have therefore invariably been healthy because they have served to bring to light the whole variety of ideas and interests in the nation. Such pressures have come in an impressive diversity of forms. In our early history the exertion of influence on the government was often violently sectional. The years of the second war with England found New England so hostile to the program pushed by the other regions as to approach the brink of secession. More recently, in our own times, the Pacific Coast followed a policy toward the Japanese that diverged significantly from that approved in other parts of the country. In such commercial matters as the negotiation of trade agreements, sectional interests are forcefully asserted and carefully weighed before reaching a national policy. That these pressures should be put on the federal government was never taken to be a sign of lack of patriotism.

So, too, class groupings have played a prominent part in shaping our diplomacy. If the great slave-owners before the Civil War thought it desirable to annex Cuba, they displayed no hesitancy in pressing their views upon the officials in Washington. Investing capitalists, eager for opportunities in the Far East at the opening of this century, made known their eagerness to the State Department and found a ready reception from Secretary of State John Hay. Still later, in the 1920's, a good part of the work of our representatives abroad was to foster the legitimate interests of American business.

Again, many religious denominations have frequently called upon the intercession of the American government in behalf of their own communicants or to further a line of action they considered desirable. The story of our relations with Mexico in the 1920's and with Spain in the 1930's could not be told without assigning a prominent role to the influence of the Catholic Church, just as, in another part of the world, our relations with China in those decades were profoundly modified by the sentiments of Protestant missionary groups.

Our government has likewise been responsive to the purely intellectual interests of reformers. It was as a result of pressure from such men that we expressed open sympathy with the European revolutions of 1848. It was the hostility of such groups that prevented President Grant from embarking upon imperialistic ventures in the Caribbean.

To those Americans who lusted after the seeming consistency and definiteness of the European chancellories this situation seemed chaotic. Like the fatuous ambassador who is said to have complained that "the national American policy is to have no foreign policy," they missed the comfortable control that enabled their opposite numbers elsewhere to determine a course of action without reference to the desires of the mass of their countrymen. But for all its faults our foreign policy has been democratic; only rarely in the United States have the interests and prejudices of a few individuals for long determined the course of our diplomacy. It is precisely through the contending force of particular pressures that we have usually arrived at a balanced policy that commanded the support of a majority. Nowhere else have the people had as much to say about world affairs.

It is necessary to understand the general character of the pressures that apply to the formulation of foreign policy before one can place in proper perspective the particular kinds of pressure that originate in ethnic groups of foreign antecedents and connections.

The shadow of the phrase "hyphenated American" hangs over discussion of this kind of influence. That term originated in the hysterical days before our entry into the First World War. Frustrated in his own political ambitions and bored with the slaughter of big game, Theodore Roosevelt then regarded with envy the opportunities for glory open to Frenchmen and Englishmen. Longing to lead a charge again, he could not believe that *real* Americans were not eager to enter the war. The deficiency in zeal, he felt, could only be accounted for by some alien flaw, the hyphens in the national character. The xenophobic hatreds of the war and the first few years after gave some currency to his phrase and popularized the notion that the action of the "hyphenated" groups was abnormal. That notion lingers in Miss Thompson's article. But most Americans have long since reverted to the more traditional attitude, which regards the actions of ethnic groups as similar to those of groups that have a sectional or class or ideological orientation.

For, apart from the fear-ridden years of the First World War, we never pretended that any group of Americans would lack special sympathy for the country of its antecedents, that emigration would dissolve the ties of home and kin and ancient aspirations. For more than a century, for instance, the revolutionary movement for Irish independence was sparked by former Irishmen who had become citizens of the United States. From this side of the ocean came a large part of the national ideology: there came as well a steady flow of men and money to further the cause. And the American government vigorously defended the right of this part of its citizenry to engage in actions hostile to England, even when those actions approached preparation for an armed rebellion. The fact that Irish Americans were able to enlist the support of their government played a prominent part in the ultimate independence won by the republic of Ireland.

In a similar way, the activities of Bohemians in this country influenced the birth of Czechoslovakia; and Germans, Italians, and a host of other people labored to join the interests of their old and new homelands. The clearest case, perhaps, though the one most often forgotten, is that of the immigrants of British descent. When the Scottish-born Andrew Carnegie or the English-born E. L. Godkin argued for closer American ties with the land of their birth, there was no suspicion that they were treacherously dividing their loyalties or deviating in the slightest degree from their attachment to the land of their adoption.

In this perspective, requests by American Jews that their government take steps on their behalf as Jews are not at all unusual. The United States can boast of a long history of such assistance even when the specific interests of American Jews were not in the least involved. Thus, from time to time, diplomatic pressure was brought to bear on Turkey, Morocco, Rumania, and Russia to induce those powers to ameliorate the condition of their own Jewish citizens. That American Jews should ask for such aid, and expect to get it, was entirely natural. That other Americans should understand and support such demands was an aspect of the view that diplomacy was a tool of the interests of the people.

WHAT lies behind Miss Thompson's fears, however, is not so much the fact that many voices intrude upon the deliberations of the diplomats (she herself has properly been by no means reticent in this respect), but rather the apprehension that some of these voices are alien. Through her statement runs a profound misunderstanding of the nature of American culture. That accounts for her trepidation.

Familiar with the minorities of Eastern Europe, Miss Thompson looks at the United States and discovers that no minorities exist here. But it is a mistake to leave the matter at that point. For the absence of minorities is not the outcome of uniformity or homogeneity in our society; it is the product of the freedom of many diverse groups to organize their cultural life with very few restraints. There is no majority church, no majority literature, and no majority political status; consequently there are no minorities. That, as I recently attempted to show in these pages,* is one of the essential ingredients of our way of life.

Miss Thompson's failure to take in this aspect of our culture is reflected in the elementary confusion with which she uses the word *nation*. I am sure she has no totalitarian sympathies; it is, no doubt, through lack of reflection that she uses the word in its inclusive totalitarian connotation. What can she have in mind when she says that immigrants on entering the United States must surrender not only their former citizenship but also their former nationality? Surely not that they must give up their familiar language, their traditional religion, the totality of their old culture! At the very time the Constitution was begun with the words, "We, the people," German was an official tongue in Pennsylvania; when Lincoln spoke of a nation, citizenship was not even a prerequisite for voting in some states; and when Wilson incautiously made the statement quoted by Miss Thompson, the public schools of Baltimore still offered instruction in German. The reason why ethnic groups became minorities in Austria and not in the United States is not that there were no ethnic groups here, but that the scope of their action was so wide in our open society that they needed no juridical definition of separate status.

It is a condition of the variety and liberty of life in this country that men are capable of expressing themselves, wherever they feel such need, through associations to which they are drawn by a common ancestry. A democracy cannot limit the freedom of such groups to act; it cannot say, "Have a folk literature but let it not impinge upon politics," for that would divorce from the real life of the people either literature or politics.

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*"Group Life Within the American Pattern," COMMENTARY, November 1949.

By the nature of its heritage America is committed; only by denying its own past could it turn away from the multi-cultural pattern which has thus far enriched it. That is not likely to happen. Until it does, every group in our society can be as rich in loyalties as it likes, and can express those loyalties wherever it has an interest in doing so—in the arts, in religion, in politics, in international affairs. We shall all be the stronger for it.

But what of Washington, and the stirring passage Miss Thompson cites? It is always worth paying heed to the utterances of the father of his country; but those are even more meaningful if they are understood exactly as he meant them and within the context of events in which he spoke. The first president, of course, addressed no particular ethnic group. In the last decade of the 18th century there were few foreign-born in the United States, and well over three-quarters of our population was of English descent. Who then held the obstinate loyalties against which his warning was directed?

These were the years of the great debate as to the course the new nation should follow in the bitter imperial struggle between France and England. In violent battles over the face of the whole globe, both powers had come into conflict with the United States, had violated our rights, had flagrantly disregarded international law. Each had its partisans in this country, Americans eager to bring us into the war as an ally of one side or the other. To that end Francophiles and Anglophiles persistently justified the acts of their friends, and condemned the acts of their enemies, though often the acts themselves were identical.

It was not the championing of one country or the other to which Washington objected. The danger he saw lay in the obstinacy and prejudice with which the argument was carried on. Each party had created for itself a double standard of international morality, refused to admit that the same criteria of right and wrong should apply to both contending powers. And this was dangerous because it stood in the way of that open clash of opinion which was the first step toward the method of compromise that is so essential to the democratic process. To such obstinacy Washington objected in domestic as well as in diplomatic affairs.

There is therefore a double significance to Washington's warning. It is important to remember that he addressed not a particular ethnic group, but all Americans and most of them natives, several generations here. The loyalties that seemed dangerous seemed so not because of their foreignness; they had developed among people who had no direct ties with the countries involved. It is even more important to remember that what seemed dangerous to Washington was not that some Americans had a double loyalty, had divided their attachments between the United States and England and France; what was dangerous was the *obstinacy and prejudice* of those attachments. We may profitably apply the implications of this message to the position of the Zionists in American society.

That Israel shares with the United States the loyalty of American Zionists is not a departure from the American pattern. Miss Thompson oversimplifies matters when she views Zionism as an East European movement. That was true of East European Zionism; but American Zionism was an American movement, rooted in New World conditions. The early Zionists in this country, from Mordecai Noah and Emma Lazarus to Henrietta Szold and Louis Brandeis, were native-born; as long as immigration continued, most foreign-born Jews were apathetic or hostile. The bitter dissensions after the First World War, when the European and American movements were thrown together, testify to the depth of the differences between them.

Miss Thompson is also in error if she imputes to Zionists the aspiration of becoming in the United States a national minority after the model of those in the Austrian Empire. No Jewish group regards that status as desirable. There has been a deplorable lack of clarity among Zionists in defining their own attitudes toward life outside Israel.

But I know of none who asks for more than some form of cultural autonomy or pluralism here. And only those who hold a monolithic view of culture would deny them that aspiration.

The position of Israel with regard to Jewish Americans is then entirely similar to the position of Italy and Ireland with regard to Italian and Irish Americans. In all these cases particular groups of Americans sustained and supported a country with which they had hereditary ties of some sort. *But they did so in terms of standards that had universal currency among all their fellow-citizens*—the spread of democracy through the world, the self-determination of nations, international action for peace, the desirability of aiding small peoples against great oppressors. One did not have to be a Jew or an Irishman or an Italian to find justice in these arguments. The strength of ancestral attachments deepened the concern of immigrants; but this was a concern they could share with all Americans who had the same standards. Multiple loyalties were no problem; all Americans held them to some degree, for their conception of nationality was not totalitarian, did not dictate that they must love only the United States.

EVEN the prospect that some Zionists would prefer to leave the United States and settle in Israel need not perturb Miss Thompson. Expatriation, the extreme of divided loyalty, has long been recognized as a right of Americans. The only relevant questions are those as to the nature of the motives that lead to expatriation and their effects upon the welfare of the United States. If an individual feels that his chances for self-fulfillment are greater outside the United States than in it, we shall be only the gainers by allowing him to seek his opportunities wherever he may find them. That was and is true in the cases of gifted artists like T. S. Eliot and Henry James. It was true of the great body of devoted missionaries of American birth who carried Western civilization and medicine to many parts of the world in the 19th century. It is true of American priests who go to Rome to enter the Vatican's service. It is true of those Irish Americans who may respond to Premier John Costello's recent appeal that they come home to rebuild Erin.

So too, if there are among American Jews young men who find a challenge to their social imagination in the new life of the Israeli communal settlements or a challenge to their constructive energies in the backward economy of the Near East, they will, in going, be following an American tradition of long standing. In their departure, they will only be spreading to another part of the world the ideals of American democracy.

What matters is the sentiments that move their going. What distinguished Ezra Pound from Henry James is not that one went to Italy and the other to England, but that one was a Fascist and the other was not, that one went with hatred in his heart, the other as a devoted critic of American society. There is a moral that should be studied by the American Zionists. To the extent that they think of *halutziut* as a pioneering movement dedicated to the furtherance of humanitarian ethics and democratic nationalism, which they share with all Americans, Miss Thompson's strictures are pointless and irrelevant. But to the extent that a minority among them attempt to build up Israel by denigrating America, to induce emigration with the argument that a sound Jewish life is impossible here, they are, consciously or not, doing an ill service to the Jews, to Israel, and to the United States.

The same yardstick may be applied to all the activities of American Zionists. We objected to the German-American Bund for the same reason we objected to the Silver Shirts, not because they were German Americans, but because they were Nazis. The meaningful question is not whether loyalties are divided, but whether they can be justified in terms acceptable to all Americans. That is why I find the occasional efforts to defend Israeli policy by a separate standard as distressing as does Miss Thompson. A few American Zionists were altogether too cavalier in their attitude toward the Arab refugees; a few were reckless in their apologetics for terrorism; a few took a hot-headed and unprincipled position on the UN decision to internationalize Jerusalem. An excess of zeal carries an occasional individual to an untenable stand; when a Jewish member of the Boston City Council voted to exclude a Japanese good-will delegation because he "felt that the Far East nations did not vote for new democracies in the United Nations, such as the state of Israel," his logic was bad and he served no one well.

Fortunately such instances are rare within American Zionism and certainly within American Jewry. Not more than a tiny fraction are disposed to regard the United States as "a sort of Diaspora of the State of Israel." But precisely because the elements which do hold that point of view are weak, because they feel powerless and often frustrated, they sometimes feel impelled to make statements and behave in ways that seem to outsiders to take on a conspiratorial aspect. That is a danger all Americans and all Jews must guard against.

I am in perfect agreement with Miss Thompson as to the dangers of labeling anti-Semitic anyone who is not a Zionist. I would go farther and criticize the deplorable tendency to identify as "Jewish self-hatred" any expression of divergent opinion. The readiness of some groups to find safety in censorship, open or explicit, is an evidence of weakness and a possible source of serious misunderstanding. The eagerness of some Zionists to achieve a kind of artificial discipline in the Jewish community through some form of imposed organizational unity is a reflection of their own sense of loss of power; but it may also breed resentments of a most serious nature. Finally I hope there will be a serious effort to eliminate any suspicion, however unfounded, that there are hidden secrets in the Zionist aims, that they seek special rights or wish to avoid general obligations.

American Jews would be wise to heed these warnings. What might happen they can see in the history of our Communist party. Probably nothing has earned American Communists so much bad will in this country as their willingness to maintain a double standard of international morality to justify Russian policies, and to retreat for that purpose into a helpless frustrated conspiracy. It would be most regrettable if even the smallest minority of American Jews sank into the same bog with regard to Israel.

On the other hand the Zionists can legitimately expect that their critics will view their situation with understanding. Drastic accusations will only strengthen the sense of frustration, weaken the role of the moderates, and confirm the hostility of those who, in the last decade, came to think they ought suspect the whole outside world. After all, there is no evidence that the Zionists here are subjecting anyone to coercive discipline; there are no grounds for fear that the nationalism of Israel is the nationalism of Hitler or that American Zionists will follow the model of the Bund. Such exasperating charges, the very tone of such comparisons, will needlessly poison an atmosphere, now still conducive to understanding.

The willingness to give an audience to such critics as Miss Thompson, and to keep these discussions open and in the public gaze, is in itself a token of the good faith of the vast majority. Now, as in the past, the Jews of this country maintain an interest and, through their government, act in behalf of those across the seas, in Israel and elsewhere, to whom they feel particular ties of brotherhood along with those that bind them to all men. Such actions and such motives are wholly creditable and wholly American.

SIX POEMS

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

Look, in the Labyrinth of Memory

REGARD, O reader, how it is with me:
This year am I five thousand years of age,
Secure in Pharaoh's great society,
Like uncle Joseph on that ancient stage.
This year will be the thirtieth eternity
The thirtieth time around the solar fire.
But if I count night watches, obviously,
How I am aged in hope and dead desire!

For I am fifty years by sleepless toil:
And more than that! for every fresh event
Flashes upon the waiting wakeful soul
New light on what the past time should
  have meant,
So that to think of years, to think like this,
Look, reader, how we stare at an abyss!

Cartoons of Coming Shows Unseen Before

I SAT amid the flickering shadows of the war,
Sad about being sad (in a capital
Where thought and art arose once, beautiful).
In the soft timeless hypnotic dark I saw
Two motion pictures show how boy meets girl,
How poor young man will win the boss's daughter
Although he constantly gets in hot water;
Then came the newsreel's circumstantial whirl.

Churchill nudged Roosevelt. With handsome glee
Roosevelt winked! Upon life's peak they played
(Power is pleasure, though anxious. Power is free!)
Mah-jongg or pat-a-cake with history,
Swaying like elephants their gaiety,
And the enormity of their success!

"Don't Speak, Remember, Once It Happened, So It May Again"

TO BE with you is sudden happiness,
No matter what hours expectation rose.
It is exciting as early success
After the fears the adolescent knows,
The panicky conceit, the precious pose,
The stagefright at the footlights of the play.
But at your side comes joy as new as May
And like an orchestra the hour flows.

Or I am like a moving, modern boat
Victorious upon the seven seas
From Brooklyn to Hong-Kong. And every thought
Childhood and manhood could not appease
Forgiven in my mind. This is because
You have become my fear and my applause.

"One in a Thousand of Years of the Nights"

Serene, "cool and composed," and easygoing
They think you are because your smiling face
Is still, and generous, and like a growing
Summer, big and rich and luminous.
The furies and the foibles do not show,
The sickness, sorrow, weakness, and the fall,
The heartbreak of the little pensive girl.
Because you cannot see yourself at all

How beautiful you are you do not know,
Because you have been beautiful so long,
The law and lore of jewels as blind as snow.
It is so long since it was otherwise,
—And I will never be as once I was
Furious at the crossroads, striking at what I do not know.

Today is Armistice, a Holiday

Today is a holiday in the Western heart,
—Three cheers, my dears, we celebrate
the peace!
If not a true peace, since we now take part
In a new death, this too, my peers, shall cease,
And once more some will study works of art,
And some will seek for Sunday in the Park
And some will search new dangers in the heart.
And some will find that knowledge is an ark.

But what? False ease I speak, false as the blue:
This life will be the same, precarious,
Kind, stupid, sullen, rich and marvelous
(New works are possible because of this)
—All false as feeling, for poor consciousness
Loses each day what never will return to us.

The Morning Light for One With Too Much Luck

Sick and used Cambridge in the suck-
Ing sound of slow rain at dead dawn
Slipped down, the slicking sound cars make
As if continually thin cloth were torn,

Blue light, plum light, fading violet light,
And then the oyster light of the wool sky:
Is this not, after all, appropriate
Light for a long used poet such as I?

The steady juices of the rain fulfill
November, ember, ashen ageing youth:
Here, my dear poet, with weather, wit, and
will,
And a long look you learned to like the truth!

Delmore Schwartz is the author of *The World is a Wedding, In Dreams Begin Responsibilities,* and other books. He is associate editor of *Partisan Review*. His latest volume of poetry, which will include the poems published here, is to be brought out by New Directions later this year.

IS SCIENCE EVIL?

Answering the Attack on Modern Knowledge and Technology

KARL JASPERS

NO ONE questions the immense significance of modern science. Through industrial technology it has transformed our existence, and its insights have transformed our consciousness, all this to an extent hitherto unheard of. The human condition throughout the millennia appears relatively stable in comparison with the impetuous movement that has now caught up mankind as a result of science and technology, and is driving it no one knows where. Science has destroyed the substance of many old beliefs and has made others questionable. Its powerful authority has brought more and more men to the point where they wish to know and not believe, where they expect to be helped by science and only by science. The present faith is that scientific understanding can solve all problems and do away with all difficulties.

Such excessive expectations result inevitably in equally excessive disillusionment. Science has still given no answer to man's doubts and despair. Instead, it has created weapons able to destroy in a few moments that which science itself helped build up slowly over the years. Accordingly, there are today two conflicting viewpoints: first, the superstition of science, which holds scientific results to be as absolute as religious myths used to be, so that even religious movements are now dressed in the garments of pseudo-science. Second, the hatred of science, which sees it as a diabolical evil of mysterious origin that has befallen mankind.

These two attitudes—both non-scientific—are so closely linked that they are usually found together, either in alternation or in an amazing compound.

A very recent example of this situation can be found in the attack against science provoked by the trial in Nuremberg of those doctors who, under Nazi orders, performed deadly experiments on human beings. One of the most esteemed medical men among German university professors has accepted the verdict on these crimes as a verdict on science itself, as a stick with which to beat "purely scientific and biological" medicine, and even the modern science of man in general: "this invisible spirit sitting on the prisoner's bench in Nuremberg, this spirit that regards men merely as objects, is not present in Nuremberg alone—it pervades the entire world." And, he adds, if this generalization may be viewed as an extenuation of the crime of the accused doctors, that is only a further indictment of purely scientific medicine.

Anyone convinced that true scientific knowledge is possible only of things that *can* be regarded as objects, and that knowledge of the subject is possible only when the subject attains a form of objectivity; anyone

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WITH the atom and hydrogen bombs and the monstrous "medical" experiments in Hitler's concentration camps, our men of science have a guilty conscience, and there are those who have lost no time in taking advantage of this in order to launch an attack on science itself as the true criminal. In October, John Dewey addressed himself in these pages to outlining what philosophers might need to do in meeting the problem posed for us by what he called the "two-facedness of science"; here, the eminent European philosopher KARL JASPERS tries to define the prerogatives and responsibilities of science, and its relation to the moral tradition of the West as based on the Bible, from which, he asserts, science received much of its original impulse and mandate. Professor Jaspers, a founder of 20th-century Existentialism, was born in Oldenburg in 1883 and is now professor of philosophy at the University of Basel. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "The Axial Age of Human History," in the November 1948 issue. This article was translated from the German by Irving Kristol.

who sees science as the one great landmark on the road to truth, and sees the real achievements of modern physicians as derived exclusively from biological and scientific medicine—such a person will see in the above statements an attack on what he feels to be fundamental to human existence. And he may perhaps have a word to say in rebuttal.

IN THE special case of the crimes against humanity committed by Nazi doctors and now laid at the door of modern science, there is a simple enough argument. Science was not needed at all, but only a certain bent of mind, for the perpetration of such outrages. Such crimes were already possible millennia ago. In the Buddhist Pali canon, there is the report of an Indian prince who had experiments performed on criminals in order to determine whether they had an immortal soul that survived their corpses: "You shall—it was ordered—put the living man in a tub, close the lid, cover it with a damp hide, lay on a thick layer of clay, put it in the oven and make a fire. This was done. When we knew the man was dead, the tub was drawn forth, uncovered, the lid removed, and we looked carefully inside to see if we could perceive the escaping soul. But we saw no escaping soul." Similarly, criminals were slowly skinned alive to see if their souls could be observed leaving their bodies. Thus there were experiments on human beings before modern science.

Better than such a defense, however, would be a consideration of what modern science really genuinely is, and what its limits are.

Science, both ancient and modern, has, in the first place, three indispensable characteristics:

First, it is *methodical* knowledge. I know something scientifically only when I also know the method by which I have this knowledge, and am thus able to ground it and mark its limits.

Second, it is *compellingly certain*. Even the uncertain—i.e., the probable or improbable—I know scientifically only insofar as I know it clearly and compellingly as such, and know the degree of its uncertainty.

Third, it is *universally valid*. I know scientifically only what is identically valid for every inquirer. Thus scientific knowledge spreads over the world and remains the same. Unanimity is a sign of universal validity. When unanimity is not attained, when there is a conflict of schools, sects, and trends of fashion, then universal validity becomes problematic.

This notion of science as methodical knowledge, compellingly certain, and universally valid, was long ago possessed by the Greeks. Modern science has not only purified this notion; it has also transformed it: a transformation that can be described by saying that modern science is *indifferent to nothing*. Everything—the smallest and meanest, the furthest and strangest—that is in any way and at any time *actual*, is relevant to modern science, simply because it *is*. Modern science wants to be thoroughly universal, allowing nothing to escape it. Nothing shall be hidden, nothing shall be silent, nothing shall be a secret.

In contrast to the science of classical antiquity, modern science is *basically unfinished*. Whereas ancient science had the appearance of something completed, to which the notion of progress was not essential, modern science progresses into the infinite. Modern science has realized that a finished and total world-view is scientifically impossible. Only when scientific criticism is crippled by making particulars absolute can a closed view of the world pretend to scientific validity—and then it is a false validity. Those great new unified systems of knowledge — such as modern physics — that have grown up in the scientific era, deal only with single aspects of reality. And reality as a whole has been fragmented as never before; whence the openness of the modern world in contrast to the closed Greek cosmos.

HOWEVER, while a total and finished world-view is no longer possible to modern science, the idea of a unity of the sciences has now come to replace it. Instead of the cosmos of the world, we have the cosmos of the sciences. Out of dissatisfaction with all the separate bits of knowledge is born the desire to unite all knowledge. The ancient sciences remained dispersed and without mutual relations. There was lacking to them the notion of a concrete totality of science. The modern sciences, however, seek to relate themselves to each other in every possible way.

At the same time the modern sciences have increased their claims. They put a low value on the possibilities of speculative thinking, they hold thought to be valid only as part of definite and concrete knowledge, only when it has stood the test of verification and thereby become infinitely modified. Only superficially do the modern and the ancient atomic theories seem to fit into the same theoretical mold. Ancient atomic theory was applied as a plausible interpretation of common experience; it was a statement complete in itself of what might possibly be the case. Modern atomic theory has developed through experiment, verification, refutation: that is, through an incessant transformation of itself in which theory is used not as an end in itself but as a tool of inquiry. Modern science, in its questioning, pushes to extremes. For example: the rational critique of appearance (as against reality) was begun in antiquity, as in the concept of perspective and its application to astronomy, but it still had some connection with immediate human experiences; today, however, this same critique, as in modern physics for instance, ventures to the very extremes of paradox, attaining a knowledge of the real that shatters any and every view of the world as a closed and complete whole.

So it is that in our day a scientific attitude has become possible that addresses itself inquisitively to everything it comes across, that is able to know what it knows in a clear and positive way, that can distinguish between the known and the unknown, and that has acquired an incredible mass of knowledge. How helpless was the Greek doctor or the Greek engineer! The ethos of modern science is the desire for reliable knowledge based on dispassionate investigation and criticism. When we enter its domain we feel as though we were breathing pure air, and seeing the dissolution of all vague talk, plausible opinions, haughty omniscience, blind faith.

But the greatness and the limitations of science are inseparable. It is a characteristic of the greatness of modern science that it comprehends its own limits:

(1) Scientific, objective knowledge is not knowledge of Being. This means that scientific knowledge is particular, not general, that it is directed toward specific objects, and not toward Being itself. Through knowledge itself, science arrives at the most positive recognition of what it does *not* know.

(2) Scientific knowledge or understanding cannot supply us with the aims of life. It cannot lead us. By virtue of its very clarity it directs us elsewhere for the sources of our life, our decisions, our love.

(3) Human freedom is not an object of science, but is the field of philosophy. Within the purview of science there is no such thing as liberty.

These are clear limits, and the person who is scientifically minded will not expect from science what it cannot give. Yet science has become, nevertheless, the indispensable element of all striving for truth, it has become the premise of philosophy and the basis in general for whatever clarity and candor are today possible. To the extent that it succeeds in penetrating all obscurities and unveiling all secrets, science directs us to the most profound, the most genuine secret.

THE unique phenomenon of modern science, so fundamentally different from anything in the past, including the science of the Greeks, owes its character to the many sources that were its origin; and these had to meet together in Western history in order to produce it.

One of these sources was Biblical religion. The rise of modern science is scarcely conceivable without its impetus. Three of the motives that have spurred research and inquiry seem to have come from it:

(1) The ethos of Biblical religion demanded truthfulness at all costs. As a result, truthfulness became a supreme value and at the same time was pushed to the point where it became a serious problem. The truthfulness demanded by God forbade making the search for knowledge a game or amusement, an aristocratic leisure activity. It was a serious affair, a calling in which everything was at stake.

(2) The world is the creation of God. The Greeks knew the cosmos as that which was complete and ordered, rational and regular, eternally subsisting. All else was nothing, merely material, not knowable and not worth knowing. But if the world is the creation of God, then everything that exists is worth knowing, just because it is God's creation; there is nothing that ought not to be known and comprehended. To know is to reflect upon God's thought. And God as creator is – in Luther's words – present even in the bowels of a louse.

The Greeks remained imprisoned in their closed world-view, in the beauty of their rational cosmos, in the logical transparency of the rational whole. Not only Aristotle and Democritus, but Thomas Aquinas and Descartes, too, obey this Greek urge, so paralyzing to the spirit of science, toward a closed universe. Entirely different is the new impulse to unveil the totality of creation. Out of this there arises the pursuit through knowledge of that reality which is not in accord with previously established laws. In the Logos itself [the Word, Reason] there is born the drive toward repeated self-destruction—not as self-immolation, but in order to arise again and ever again in a process that is to be continued infinitely. This science springs from a Logos that does not remain closed within itself, but is open to an anti-Logos which it permeates by the very act of subordinating itself to it. The continuous, unceasing reciprocal action of theory and experiment is the simple and great example and symbol of the universal process that is the dialectic between Logos and anti-Logos.

This new urge for knowledge sees the world no longer as simply beautiful. This knowledge ignores the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the wicked. It is true that in the end, *omne ens est bonum* [all Being is good], that is, as a creation of God. This goodness, however, is no longer the transparent and self-sufficient beauty of the Greeks. It is present only in the love of all existent things as created by God, and it is present therefore in our confidence in the significance of inquiry. The knowledge of the createdness of all worldly things replaces indifference in the face of the flux of reality with limitless questioning, an insatiable spirit of inquiry.

But the world that is known and knowable is, as created Being, Being of the second rank. For the world is unfathomable, it has its ground in another, a Creator, it is not self-contained and it is not containable by knowledge. The Being of the world cannot be comprehended as definitive, absolute reality, but points always to another.

The idea of creation makes worthy of love whatever is, for it is God's creation; and it makes possible, by this, an intimacy with reality never before attained. But at the same time it gives evidence of the incalculable distance from that Being which is not merely created Being but Being itself, God.

(3) The reality of this world is full of cruelty and horror for men. "That's the way things are," is what man must truthfully say. If, however, God is the world's creator, then he is responsible for his creation. The question of justifying God's ways becomes with Job a struggle with the divine for the knowledge of reality. It is a struggle against God, for God. God's existence is undisputed and just because of this the struggle arises. It would cease if faith were extinguished.

This God, with his unconditional demand for truthfulness, refuses to be grasped through illusions. In the Bible, he condemns the theologians who wish to console and comfort Job with dogmas and sophisms. This God insists upon science, whose content always seems to bring forth an indictment of him. Thus we have the adventure of knowledge, the furtherance of unrestricted knowledge—and at the same time, a timidity, an awe in the face of it. There was an inner tension to be observed in many scientists of the past century, as if they heard: God's will is unconfined inquiry, inquiry is in the service of God—and at the same time: it is an encroachment on God's domain, all shall not be revealed.

This struggle goes hand in hand with the struggle of the man of science against all that he holds most dear, his ideals, his beliefs; they must be proven, newly verified, or else transformed. Since God could not be believed in if he were not able to withstand all the questions arising from the facts of reality, and since the seeking of God involves the painful sacrifice of all illusions, so true inquiry is the struggle against all personal desires and expectations.

This struggle finds its final test in the struggle of the scientist with his own theses. It is the determining characteristic of the modern scientist that he seeks out the strongest points in the criticism of his opponents and exposes himself to them. What in appearance is self-destructiveness becomes, in this case, productive. And it is evidence of a degradation of science when discussion is shunned or condemned, when men imprison themselves and their ideas in a milieu of like-minded savants and become fanatically aggressive to all outside it.

THAT modern science, like all things, contains its own share of corruption, that men of science only too often fail to live up to its standards, that science can be used for violent and criminal ends, that man will steal, plunder, abuse, and kill to gain knowledge—all this is no argument against science.

To be sure, science as such sets up no barriers. As science, it is neither human nor inhuman. So far as the well-being of humanity is concerned, science needs guidance from other sources. Science in itself is not enough—or should not be. Even medicine is only a scientific means, serving an eternal ideal, the aid of the sick and the protection of the healthy.

When the spirit of a faithless age can become the cause of atrocities all over the world, then it can also influence the conduct of the scientist and the behavior of the physician, especially in those areas of activity where science itself is confused and unguided. It is not the spirit of science but the spirit of its vessels that is depraved. Count Keyserling's dictum—"The roots of truth-seeking lie in primitive aggression"—is as little valid for science as it is for any genuine truth-seeking. The spirit of science is in no way primarily aggressive, but becomes so only when truth is prohibited; for men rebel against the glossing over of truth or its suppression.

In our present situation the task is to attain to that true science which knows what it knows at the same time that it knows what it cannot know. This science shows us the ways to the truth that are the indispensable precondition of every other truth. We know what Mephistopheles knew when he thought he had outwitted Faust:

Verachte nur Vernunft und Wissenschaft
Des Menschen allerhöchste Kraft
So habe ich Dich schon unbedingt.
(Do but scorn Reason and Science
Man's supreme strength
Then I'll have you for sure.)

THE BATTLE OF ABINGTON TOWNSHIP

A Case History in Cooperative Housing

MORTON M. HUNT

A FEW miles north of Philadelphia on route 611 is the Township of Abington, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. To the east of the highway lies Crosswicks Farms, a large irregular tract of some two hundred acres of rolling countryside—the long unsaleable estate of a millionaire stock-broker, the late Clement B. Newbold. On a high clearing stood, until recently, his home, in ruins, but recognizable as the seventy-five-room Georgian mansion (six central furnaces) it had been in another era. Empty for over twenty years, it had suffered from fire, snow, and wind. The gilt was peeling from the ballroom, and the formal gardens had disappeared beneath a growth of weeds and saplings. North and west of the Newbold estate is the area known as Rydal. Smooth black roads wind through avenues of cedars, blue spruce, and neatly-trimmed lawns that come down to the very edge of the macadam. The homes are huge, rambling Tudor—owned by manufacturers, businessmen, and industrial executives.

To the east of the estate lies a neighborhood of small neat houses, each with a green lawn and a garage. Here, in Fox Chase Manor, lives a community of suburbanites who commute daily on the Reading Railroad to central Philadelphia. They are not wealthy, but they are proud of their houses and of their remoteness from the untidy, dirty city.

In this genteel Philadelphia setting less than three years ago, a group of veterans chose to build a cooperative housing project. Their plan was announced on a June day in 1947, when the *Inquirer* ran an appropriately short item reporting a new housing development in the Philadelphia area for qualified veterans. On the face of it, the project looked no different from hundreds of other similar projects, save possibly that it was to be a cooperative venture.

WITHIN a few hours of the story's appearance, crowds had gathered at the offices of the AVHC—the American Veterans Housing Cooperative—in the basement of Philadelphia's musty old Academy of Music building. Thousands inquired during the first few weeks. They learned that any honorably discharged veteran with an income of not less than fifty-five dollars a week could join. Since the project would be cooperative, the home owners would save on the middleman's and builder's usual profits. By hiring their own contractors, the organization would be able to build whatever type of house its members agreed upon—and could afford. After completion there would be other advantages to working together as a community through an elected council: fuel oil—bought in bulk—would cost six cents per gallon, instead of eight; non-profit stores and a communal nursery would produce still further economies. Above all, there would be inexpensive housing for a few of the hundred thousand Philadelphians who needed it.

MORTON M. HUNT here presents a case history in veterans' housing—the story of a plan for a cooperative project on the outskirts of Philadelphia which uncovered some of the ugly tensions that so often lie beneath the apparently placid surface of American suburbia. The story told here is, of course, only one story—but in its main outlines it is characteristic of several of the thirty or forty veterans' cooperatives that have struggled or died a-borning since the war; and it is a significant part of a larger problem—that of discriminatory trends in housing, which make the whole area one of the chief sources of present-day prejudice in the United States. Mr. Hunt has been an editor of *Science Illustrated* and *Look*. He was born in Philadelphia in 1920, and attended Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. He has contributed to *This Week*, the *Nation*, *Coronet*, and a number of other publications.

By August over three hundred veterans—most in their late twenties and early thirties—had paid an advance of two hundred and fifty dollars to cover the operating expenses of the organization and a down payment toward the purchase of land. The members elected their own board of directors, who, lacking experience themselves, followed the guidance of seven members of the American Veterans Committee, none of whom personally needed a house, but who had originally founded the co-op. In the previous nine months these seven had raised over ten thousand dollars in non-interest loans from a number of local benefactors, formed the cooperative corporation, consulted with architects and mortgage specialists, and collected several hundred pounds of books on co-op management, building codes, zoning laws, taxes, and amortization rates. At the head of the organization was O'Brien Boldt, paid administrator of the cooperative, and himself a veteran. His chief adviser and co-worker was Robert K. Greenfield, a successful Philadelphia lawyer, who had first conceived the plan and suggested it to the AVC.

Boldt had found that the dilapidated, weed-encrusted Newbold estate was only thirty minutes' commuting time from the center of the city, and, although unimproved farmland, it was surrounded by an existing network of roads and utility lines. He had studied the local zoning regulations, and found that the kind of house the members wanted would conform to local ordinances and zoning regulations. He had consulted the cooperative's architects, who studied the topography and the building codes. From all standpoints, they reported, the site was perfect.

Boldt and Greenfield began a series of negotiations with the trustees of the estate, who were eager to sell, but wary of the co-op's small capital. They did finally reach a compromise agreement: the co-op would buy approximately forty-four acres of land (near Fox Chase Manor) for forty-four thousand dollars, and would pay five thousand dollars more as a deposit on the rest, which they would buy in instalments every four months.

As rapidly as possible, the co-op undertook detailed arrangements. Plans for the new streets to be carved out of the farmland were worked out fully, using names of Abington war dead from a list submitted by the Gold Star Mothers. The model house plan was completed. It was to be a modern-looking, cement-block bungalow with a pitched roof and picture windows. There would be five variations of detail, but all houses included three full bedrooms, radiant floor heating, and a kitchen-laundry equipped with a Bendix washing machine. The bids ran higher than Boldt had hoped (costs had risen ten per cent in a year), and it looked as if house and land would finally cost about $9,300 complete, but similar houses in that area were selling for about twelve thousand dollars.

WHILE the co-op completed its arrangements, the residents of Rydal were making some plans of their own. They called a series of meetings in their homes. Among the leaders were William Grimditch, a former Philco executive and electronics consultant; Russell A. Muth, himself a home builder and officer of the Philadelphia Home Builders Association; Ernest Muehleck, manufacturer of Keasbey and Mattison asbestos shingles; Aaron Hardwick, executive of the Delta Finishing Company textile firm; Thomas Montague, a real estate dealer with considerable Rydal interests; and others. Out of these meetings grew an organization of about fifty members, the "Rydal-Meadowbrook Civic Association," with Muehleck as president.

Having formed an organization, they were not long in making their first move. One of the trustees of the Newbold estate was the Pennsylvania Company for Banking and Trusts. Grimditch, a heavy depositor in the bank, called on a bank executive. As the bank official later reported, Grimditch asked that the bank break its contract to sell the land to the co-op. If not, he and other depositors from Rydal-Meadowbrook would withdraw their accounts.

According to Rydal residents and bank employes—but neither confirmed nor denied by the bank itself—close to a million dollars was actually withdrawn. The Rydal-Meadowbrook group included executives in the Budd Company, Allegheny Iron and Metal, Keasbey and Mattison, and the Philadelphia Home Builders Association. The Pennsylvania Company for Banking and Trusts had an understandable distaste for a falling out with them. William Kurts, president of the bank, later wrote to a friend: "As you know, a number of prominent persons have been upset by the sale [of land to the co-op] and have said a good many things which, speaking mildly, are not complimentary to the Pennsylvania Company." But, he went on, the bank could not, and it would not in any case, break a legitimate contract. The Civic Association's first move ended in failure.

Their next step was more successful. The Rydal-Meadowbrook group hired Samuel High, Jr., a local lawyer of considerable political standing, as their adviser. Almost immediately High came up with a practical, if traditional, suggestion: petition the thirteen township commissioners for a change in the zoning laws, making the proposed houses unacceptable.

On February 12, 1948, High came to the evening meeting of the commissioners in the township building and presented a petition with forty-nine signatures requesting a radical change in zoning. The veterans' previously announced plan called for about twelve thousand cubic feet of interior space in each house, and each lot was to be about one-fifth of an acre. The zoning petition asked not for any thorough-going modernization of the township system, but requested changes in an area including only the Newbold estate and a little surrounding land, and specified that houses in that area be at least thirty thousand cubic feet in size, on half-acre lots. Even such usually mild local newspapers as the Easton *Road Guide* and the Jenkintown *Times-Chronicle* referred to the proposal as an attempt to create a "superzone," with more stringent regulations than any that existed in the entire township. The smallest permissible building under such an ordinance, the architects for the veterans estimated, would have to cost at least thirty thousand dollars.

At the same time, on the opposite side of the estate in the inexpensive Fox Chase Manor area, a neighborhood group known as the Abington Lower Civic Association began to discuss the co-op project. Officers of Rydal-Meadowbrook approached them and urged their collaboration. Between the filing of the Rydal petition on February 12, and the public hearing on March 8, an identical petition was circulated at meetings of the Abington group and carried around from door to door; it was signed by 363 Abington residents.

The signers of the petition, for the most part, lived in houses no bigger than the ones the co-op wanted to build; they earned little more than the average co-op member; they came from approximately the same white-collar group. What inspired their protest?

The answer filtered through slowly. Robert Boston, a member of the co-op's board of directors, had visited some of the wealthier Rydal residents in their own homes. One of them, while asking him questions about the co-op, unexpectedly said: "Now, why does a fine clean-cut fellow like yourself want to get mixed up in an organization that is ninety-eight per cent Jewish?" Boston answered that the men were all decent, married, qualified veterans, and their religion had nothing to do with it. (In fact, the co-op was then about one-third Jewish, but Boston felt that to say so then would sound like an apology.)

At a public meeting called by impartial citizens, Catholic chaplain Thomas Durkin of the Roslyn Veterans of Foreign Wars stated that he had received a number of phone calls from people who informed him, in the course of asking for his aid in fighting the co-op, that O'Brien Boldt's real name was Isaac Steinbolt or Israel Greenboldt. A local newspaper reporter heard rumors from townspeople (though he did not print them) that Boldt was a paid Red organizer, and had been jailed for Communist activities.

Greenfield himself met the directors of the Abington Lower Civic Association one night and was asked whether it was true that the co-op was twenty per cent Negro. "As a matter of fact," said the lawyer, "we wanted to let Negroes in—they're veterans, too, you know. But we've been advised that big mortgage investors, unfortunately, will not take mortgages on a mixed project. There are no Negroes in the cooperative." But the rumor never died.

Boldt, while talking to members of the Jenkintown Catholic War Veterans Post one day, asked about these rumors. Thomas Devlin, an officer of the post, said with obvious embarrassment that Boldt ought to know what was being said by the cooperative's opponents—that the cooperative was a "phony promotion of some shyster-kikes." "You ought to try to stop the rumors, if you can," he added uncomfortably.

As opposition to the cooperative mounted, the members formulated a counter-strategy. Boldt himself suggested a friendship campaign and called for help at a membership meeting one night. About twenty volunteered to take part; they would talk to Abingtonians, try to convince them that the co-op was a worthwhile addition to the township. The effort went on for weeks. The volunteers concentrated on the Rydal people, who had been the original source of opposition. For the most part, the volunteers were received courteously but coldly. Some of the people they called on claimed to have been misinformed; some few actually said they might not oppose the cooperative in the future, now that they saw what "nice young men" belonged to it. But the final returns were discouraging, for the great majority of the Rydal people refused to change their minds.

Said one: "Your development is simply bound to cause a drop in values around here. You can't blame me for fighting it. I'm not against you personally at all." Said a second: "I'm only trying to look out for my own property." Said a third: "Now after all, why did you have to pick a location out of your element?" Said a fourth: "You'd do well to quit. My group can drag this out indefinitely." Said a fifth: "Some of our people can even make it tough for you to get building materials. Or mortgages, for that matter." Said a sixth: "I have positive information that this is a kike promotional scheme." Said a seventh: "I don't know a thing about it. Don't want to. I just go along with the rest of them." Thomas Lee of the Abington Township Association tried his best to mediate these complaints, even arranging several meetings at which compromises were discussed. The Rydal-Meadowbrook and Abington Lower associations vetoed all compromises. "We have other ways to fight this thing," one of them told Lee. "We don't have to compromise."

On March 8, 1948, when the proposed zoning amendment was to be discussed before the town commissioners, Greenfield enlisted the aid of C. Brewster Rhoads, a prominent lawyer living in Abington. Rhoads had a lost a son in the war and felt sympathetic toward the veterans. He was personally friendly with many Rydal residents and had the assured manner of an equal when interrogating them. (Rhoads withdrew his assistance after this hearing. "After all," he said, "I play golf with these people. They're my neighbors. I can't continue a running fight with them.")

The small commission room was filled with three hundred people. For three hours the two attorneys, High and Rhoads, questioned witnesses. In the course of the hearing, the Rydal-Meadowbrook and Abington Lower witnesses stressed the destruction of existing house values and the general unsightliness of so many new homes all in the same pattern. No one mentioned the question of race, religion, or income level.

Said Ernest Muehleck, the shingle manufacturer: "In order to maintain and retain the amenities of the countryside, I feel the zoning laws need to be changed." Said John O'Neill, a textile merchant: "This section is the showplace of the United States. Smaller homes would destroy its character and loveliness." Said Samuel High, attorney for Rydal-Meadowbrook: "It is impossible to build decent homes by mass production."

When Rhoads cross-examined the witnesses, he brought out that many of the Rydal people lived too far across the rolling land even to see the proposed houses. He showed that the area proposed for rezoning had one triangular bite missing from it in a most unreasonable place, and that that bite belonged to Russell Muth of Rydal. Muth was a builder himself, and possibly houses of thirty thousand cubic feet wouldn't be easy to sell—but Muth was nevertheless one of the petitioners for rezoning, at least as long as his land was exempt. Rhoads showed also that many of the Abington Lower people owned smaller homes on smaller lots and with lower assessments than those the veterans would have. The cooperative concluded its case by giving the commissioners a petition signed by 615 Abingtonians who were against the zoning amendment, two hundred more than were for it.

The commissioners, with a characteristic lack of drama, unanimously voted that "the matter be taken under advisement." At a small, quiet meeting three days later they voted, 10 to 2, to kill the rezoning amendment. The property owners' second move had failed. But it had delayed the cooperative two months—and running expenses for the project at this stage were about one thousand dollars a month. Further delays might be a decisive factor in stopping the project.

In fact, it soon became clear that the "other means of fighting" promised earlier would be delay and more delay. A Rydal resident had even told Richard W. Rettig, Jr., the young high-school teacher who was president of the co-op, "We've got one man who'll personally spend twenty-five thousand dollars to keep you fellows and your kind out of here. We'll fight you and delay you until you go broke. You'll never last long enough to start building."

After throwing out the rezoning amendment, the commissioners were required to pass on the cooperative's site plan, a blueprint showing the proposed road layout and the breakdown of the area into numbered lots. They scheduled this decision for their April 8 meeting. The day before the meeting, thirty opponents of the co-op sent a lawyer to the Common Pleas Court of Montgomery County for a temporary injunction preventing the commissioners from taking any action the following night. The injunction was based on an illustrated brochure about the co-op which spoke of the future establishment of community stores. Existing regulations clearly forbade stores in this area, and the brochure did not mention that the stores would have to await a change in zoning regulations. The co-op's opponents used this point to secure another delay.

Five days later in court, Greenfield offered to join in a "consent decree," specifying that, in any case, no stores would be built in the project unless first approved by the township. The court thereupon withdrew the injunction—but by then the commissioners had postponed action on the site plan until May. Another month, another thousand dollars; worse than that—housing costs were soaring every month, and mortgages were getting ever harder to place.

Rettig suggested to Boldt that, to expedite matters, the co-op should demand a special meeting of the commissioners to consider the site plan, now that the injunction was out of the way. The commissioners agreed amiably, and met on the night of April 20. Just two days before the meeting the Rydal-Meadowbrook and Abington Lower associations mailed out two thousand letters to townspeople strenuously attacking the cooperative and urging every reader to send his protest to the commissioners.

The night of the meeting, one commissioner pointed out that by some oversight the notice of the hearing had not listed the site plan as part of the agenda. According to strict interpretation of the rules, the commissioners could refuse to discuss it until May. And so they did, by a vote of 12 to 0.

The person who proudly takes credit for changing the attitude of the Commission is a publicity man named Charles Hoban. Hoban, who has offices in downtown Philadelphia, was hired by the Rydal association after the zoning amendment had fallen through. He studied the situation and took on the association as a temporary client.

Hoban had attended a meeting in Rydal, where he was asked by the members what steps they should take next. "First of all," he said, "let's cut out this anti-Semitic stuff. Nobody with any brains talks anti-Semitism. We can build a good case on the question of the shopping district." (Hoban's efforts led directly to the injunction of April 7.) Also, he added, he had heard of a cooperative in New Brunswick, New Jersey, that had failed. It should be possible to show that the Abington cooperative would probably fail for similar reasons.

Although Hoban believed that anti-Semitism was a stupid tactic, he himself said he thought the co-op ninety-five per cent Jewish. (The proportion of Jews rose slowly as some worried Gentiles drifted out; although no census was ever taken, the present officers feel that the co-op may be slightly more than fifty per cent Jewish. At the time that Hoban went to work for the Rydal-Meadowbrook group, the proportion was nearer one-third.)

In May, Hoban wrote to the newspapers, "We do not want to see this unhappy venture [the co-op that had failed in New Brunswick] repeated here. We feel that we are acting in the best interests of the township, and," he added rather piously, "in the interests of veterans who want homes of their own."

Hoban also capitalized on the co-op's mistakes. In that same brochure in which it had talked about a shopping district, he found the statement that the co-op had been "checked by the Better Business Bureau of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce." Now, the Better Business Bureau was *not* affiliated with the Chamber and it never, as a matter of policy, allowed its name to be used as an endorsement. The Bureau had indeed investigated the co-op, and told various inquirers that it could find no fault. But they did write to Boldt and asked him to discontinue using their name, simply because no one was ever given that privilege. The Bureau's only method of endorsement was to investigate, and then advise individuals.

Hoban, at any rate, managed to mention in his releases that the cooperative had misused the endorsement of the Better Business Bureau, and he photostated and distributed a letter from the Bureau to that effect. Those who read the letter naturally, though mistakenly, inferred that the co-op had not been cleared by the Better Business Bureau.

There were other steps taken without benefit of public relations counsel. One such instance occurred after Robert Boston had indiscreetly introduced himself in the Rydal community by presenting a calling card bearing his own name and the name of his employer, the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. Whether the Chamber chastised Robert Boston on its own initiative or at the behest of Rydal's residents whose firms contributed heavily to the Chamber, chastised he was. Chamber manager Clement V. Conole sent him a memo that read in part: "I would like to ask you to withdraw from the Cooperative Real Estate Development and Movement [*sic*] so as to avoid any further confusion insofar as the Chamber of Commerce is concerned." Boston sent his resignation to the Chamber several days later, charging that the campaign against the co-op was anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic. The resignation was accepted immediately, without comment.

On the night of May 5, the Abington Township commissioners met to consider the site plan of the cooperative. There was no apparent reason for another delay. The plan had been examined by three township departments and found satisfactory. Once again the room was crowded. This time the commissioners allowed no statements to be volunteered by the people attending the meeting. Instead they asked specific questions and delivered themselves of various opinions. They did not permit rebuttals.

Commissioner Mackenzie emerged as a strong opponent of the co-op, and talked at length about the shopping center, although Greenfield had weeks ago signed the consent decree banning stores. "I see a lot of losers and not one winner if this project ever gets started," he said. Commissioner Hettenbach said, among other things, "I do not want to see Abington Township used as a test tube for any socialistic venture." Township solicitor Groshens said, "The plan is not just a subdivision, but a community which will have nine hundred small houses jammed into the area." (The co-op was asking to build one hundred and eighty-three houses on the forty-four acres, and couldn't even file plans for the rest of the property at this time, nor until it owned it.)

The co-op members present were undisturbed by these objections. The plans—they felt—were correct and legal, and had to be approved. At the roll-call vote there were ten votes against the site plan, and only three for it. The co-op members had expected hostility, to be sure, but they felt certain of their legal position. The vote shocked them.

The action of the Commission in refusing the site plan was too far out of reasonable bounds even for the conservative Philadelphia *Inquirer*. "The arbitrary action of the Abington Township Commissioners," said the *Inquirer*, "constitutes a glaring injustice which should be remedied without delay." Later the *Inquirer* wrote again, "Obstructive tactics such as those employed to block a housing development which has complied with every legal requirement would be out of order in any circumstances. The fact that they serve to keep veterans out of badly needed homes simply accentuates the fault."

At a glum strategy meeting after the vote had been taken, several co-op members pointed out again that it was the delay, rather than the prospect of final defeat, that troubled them most. They needed houses now, not some time in the future. Many of them were living with in-laws; many were in miserably inadequate quarters; a number were delaying having children until they had the room.

Greenfield assured them he knew the effect of the delay. He proposed that, in the name of one co-op member, but on behalf of all of them, his law firm sue thirty-five of their opponents for damages. The plaintiff member would be John Durney, a mild-mannered housepainter. The damages asked would be a million dollars. Greenfield explained that the million dollars in damages was not primarily the objective. "We want them to lay off," he said. "But they *have* conspired to prevent the co-op from carrying out its contract with each of you." He hoped, he said, that their adversaries would stop fighting and work towards a friendly settlement.

The Court of Quarter Sessions also thought the commissioners' rejection of the site plan rather strange. In Norristown, the seat of Montgomery County, two judges heard two commissioners and the township engineer admit that the site plan met all regulations and had been turned down for "other reasons." A few days later the court handed down its decision, overruling the commissioners and approving the plan. But before the co-op members had time to celebrate, a lawyer for the commissioners filed a six-count exception to the court decision, although both he and the commissioners must have known that under an act of 1947 the decisions of this court were not subject to exception. The court threw out the six-count exception two days later, but still the aim—accomplished repeatedly—was delay, however small. The co-op, with its site plan now approved by the court, immediately asked the township engineer to issue a highway construction permit for the approved roads. On June 9 the township lawyer again filed a petition for reargument of the Norristown decision on a technical point. The engineer refused to consider the highway permit, pending the outcome of this second appeal.

The co-op had bought its land on December 8, 1947. It was already June 9, 1948. It was nearly a month more before the case was reheard. It was another two weeks before the decision came down. The court, of course, upheld its former decision—but the co-op had been held off another six weeks. Now, at last, the way seemed clear.

But now the township engineer insisted—with the legal backing of a three-months-old amendment—that the co-op post bond, to obtain its highway permit. Posting bond required that the co-op put up enough money to guarantee completion of any highway improvements it started, or get an insurance company to make such a guarantee. The bond would be about $168,000. The co-op had less than $20,000 left out of its original $78,000 (having spent $49,000 for land and $9,000 on operating expenses). Normally, as soon as the co-op had its mortgage loans pledged, it could have secured the needed bond. But no bank would approve a mortgage until the house plans were approved by the commissioners.

Approval of the house plans turned out to be no simple matter. At the regular meeting of the Commission on July 15, the subject for discussion was a *new* zoning amendment. This one, unlike the one brought up in March, did not single out the Newbold estate for change. It went comprehensively through all of Abington. The result in the Newbold estate area, however, was to double the minimum house size, increase the lot size, and thus place the cost far beyond the means of the veterans in the cooperative.

The new rezoning plan had not been proposed by the Rydal group. Even had they wanted to suggest it themselves, there was a damage suit now confronting them, and such an act might be a further ground for damages. Instead, the zoning amendment came from a committee of the commissioners themselves, a procedure most unusual in Abington government. On fairly short notice, Boldt had gathered some support and a few statements to meet this latest move. Seven people were allowed to speak against the proposal, for about half an hour. Then, for less than five minutes, one lawyer spoke on behalf of it. Without further ceremony, the proposal was passed by a vote of nine in favor, none opposed, one abstaining.

Now, of course, the house plans were worthless. They could not be approved under the new law. But unless they were approved, the co-op could not get mortgage financing. Without a mortgage commitment, it would be unable to post bond for the highway permit. And under the new Abington procedure, if it lacked the highway permit, it could not even *submit* its house plans to the Commission; and without a legal rejection of the house plans it could not challenge the new zoning law in court. The strangling circle, drawn by the resident associations, the commissioners, the engineer, and the lawyers, had closed. The veterans had no immediate counter-plans.

THAT was in July 1948—more than a year since the first news of the co-op had appeared in the *Inquirer*. The law, perhaps necessarily, can be an astonishingly slow process, paying little heed to the desires of those who want it to set things aright for them. The million-dollar damage suit, to take only a single example, was dusted off after the rezoning went through, and put into active shape. But counsel for the defendants found a variety of legal technicalities, one after another, to hold it off. After one year of delays, the defense successfully had the whole suit thrown out on a point dealing with John Durney's place of residence. Greenfield's firm had to begin the action all over again in the name of another member and is only now preparing to take depositions; the case actually will not get into the courts for months.

While awaiting more hopeful developments, the cooperative had to retrench. Boldt relinquished his job and moved to New York with his wife and two children, where he found other work in the housing field. The secretarial help was dropped, and Margaret Gaynor, a Philadelphia high school teacher, took over in her free time. In any case, there was little business; the entire project had fallen into quiescence.

On one other front, however, the veterans found a way to continue their fight. Rettig, the co-op president, realized one day that *if* they did try to build a house without the highway bond, they could then challenge the zoning law in court. And there was one lot on Huntington Turnpike—just one—that would not require a highway permit before building. And so one Saturday morning in October 1948, a contingent of about forty veterans came with picks, shovels, wives, and a few babies, to clear Lot One by hand and build a house in their weekends. They hacked away at the poison ivy; about ten of them got serious cases of poisoning. They dug foundation ditches and found themselves badly blistered. They poured part of the concrete foundation in the third week and had to haul a stray dog out of it. The fourth and fifth weeks they started putting up cinder-block walls. One Saturday afternoon, as they worked, a man drove up, parked his car, and pinned a notice on a tree. It was a stop-work order from the township engineer, pointing out that no construction over two feet in height was allowed under the law, unless passed by the Commission. The cinder-block wall had reached two feet. To go on would mean a continuing daily fine. There was nothing to do but stop.

But now the co-op had a test case, which Greenfield immediately began to push through court, even though the stoppage of work was a blow to many members. And although the winter months and the spring passed, with nothing new happening except for obscure skirmishes in the lawyers' offices, the group kept a semblance of hope.

The house on Lot One did eventually turn the tide for them. Greenfield had appealed to the Montgomery County Court, saying that the Commission's actions were illegal: it had rezoned the township on a sliding-scale basis (in the Newbold estate area a larger minimum house was required than in other zones), and it had stopped the building of the test house on the basis of a zoning law that was passed *after* the cooperative, in good faith, had made a contract to build.

Two and a half years after the veterans had read the first announcement of the cooperative in the newspapers, one and a half years after the township Commission had finally zoned them out of Abington, a year and two months after the men had started their house on Lot One, the law finally ground out an answer.

On December 13, 1949, Judge Harold G. Knight of the Montgomery County Court handed down the decision of the three-judge panel, which said: "It is rather difficult to see how a house containing 908 square feet of floor area can promote the public health, safety, and welfare of a T district residence . . . and detract from the public welfare in a V district house where 1400 feet is the minimum. . . . When the background and history of this amendment is considered, it appears as a thinly disguised attempt to regulate the cost of houses in the V district and thus make it impossible for the veterans to go ahead with their proposed operations. It is an attempt to segregate economic classes, and this, we believe, cannot be accomplished by zoning." As an added point, the court held that the veterans had acquired a "vested right" in Abington, and that rezoning carried out *after* their contracts had been made would not, in any case, apply to them.

On January 2, 1950, the members of the Abington Township Commission, meeting to clean up left-over details, hotly discussed the question of whether to appeal this latest court decision, and split 6 to 6 on the issue. The president (Russell Harrar, a commissioner who had always favored the cooperative) cast the deciding vote against appealing.

By a coincidence, the damage suit in the Federal District Court in Philadelphia broke into the newspapers the next day. As before, the defense had been putting forth motions to dismiss the suit altogether (it had not yet reached the courtroom floor). But on January 3, Federal Judge Kirkpatrick dismissed all defense motions for dismissal of the suit. The case *would* come to court, after the taking of sworn depositions, according to federal court procedure.

With these two pieces of news, the near-dead cooperative stirred and sat up. Telephone calls began pouring in to Margaret Gaynor asking every imaginable kind of detail. Members spoke to each other, met informally in their homes. The several items in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* and the *Evening Bulletin* brought dozens of calls from newcomers who wanted to know whether they could join.

Hastily the Board of Directors started to make plans. There was so much to discuss that three or four such meetings were required before any real progress was made. By January 31 they called and held a general membership meeting at which the plans were outlined. About eighty members appeared; and in response to a questionnaire sent out by Margaret Gaynor, it appeared that a total of perhaps a hundred would still want to go on with the cooperative plan. The waiting list of new applicants, with no effort on the co-op's part, already numbered thirty or more, and there seemed to be no reason why the remaining forty or fifty spots could not be easily filled.

At the meeting, the members were told that the architects had redrawn some parts of the proposed houses, making numerous improvements at no extra cost. The Board said it was conferring with the builders and lending companies: in the past two years the picture had changed, and everybody seemed eager for business now. The Board reported that the treasury was down to about two hundred and fifty dollars, but that no assessment would be necessary. If any wealthy benefactor once more offered them a loan, as in the past, they would be glad to take it; if not, they would struggle along until the construction money came through in a month or two. (Margaret Gaynor has been working for the co-op without pay for months; and all other work now going on is being done by members themselves, not hired employes.)

The damage suit would continue, either to a final outcome or a settlement, for the cooperative had, by the delays, lost its five thousand dollar option on the remaining land and thousands in running expenses.

The Board announced, on the basis of everything it had learned in three weeks of frantic activity, that the contracts should be signed by the end of February, and ground broken about a month after. In meetings with the township engineer and solicitor, Greenfield and the Board members found only the greatest geniality and willingness to get ahead with it. Aside from a shortage of cash, the way ahead seemed clear.

The house on Lot One now will be built —and so will the other one hundred and eighty or so homes. By this summer, the first of the veterans should be moving in to their new community, three years after they first heard about it. How they will get along with their neighbors, both in Fox Chase Manor and in Rydal, is still a moot point; probably the frictions will gradually disappear. As time passes, the unpleasantness and the waiting will seem smaller and smaller in retrospect, and there may even be a traditional "happily-ever-after" ending for this co-op, if not for the other projects that may have met with less "good fortune."

* * *

WHERE the Abington veterans cooperative seems likely to succeed, several dozen others throughout the country have already, for one reason or another, quite thoroughly perished. Taking notice of this, the Truman administration has proposed an extensive middle-income housing bill which would set up a national cooperative housing administration to give assistance to cooperative developments throughout the country. The federal government would make direct loans of one hundred per cent of the cost of the cooperative projects at three per cent interest for fifty years.

There is no doubt that such legislation would help provide housing for many of the sixteen million in the middle-income group who need homes. But in view of the deep-seated opposition—the very word "cooperative" seeming almost automatically to evoke strong impulses of exclusiveness with inevitable overtones of race and class prejudice—financing will hardly do more, it is feared, than remove one mode of community sabotage: the delaying and blocking of financing. The will to conformity and uniformity, it can be anticipated, will find new ways to deny homes and freedom of movement to sections of our population that need them most.

MAN'S MORALS AND GOD'S WILL

The Meaning of Abraham's Sacrifice

DAVID BAUMGARDT

> And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him: 'Abraham'; and he said: 'Here am I.'
>
> And He said: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.'
>
> And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.
>
> On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.
>
> And Abraham said unto his young men: 'Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come back to you.'
>
> And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.
>
> And Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father, and said: 'My father.' And he said: 'Here am I, my son.' And he said: 'Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?'
>
> And Abraham said: 'God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So they went both of them together.
>
> And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.
>
> And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.
>
> And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said: 'Abraham, Abraham.' And he said: 'Here am I.'
>
> And he said: 'Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou art a God-fearing man, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.'
>
> And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.
>
> And Abraham called the name of that place Adonai-jireh; as it is said to this day: 'In the mount where the Lord is seen.'
>
> And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven,
>
> And said: 'By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son,
>
> That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;
>
> And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast hearkened to My voice.' (Gen. 22.)

Goethe credited himself with having put a good deal of mystery into his *Faust*. How much more merit then must be given to the author of the *akedah*—the story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac—for the more than one hundred thousand interpretations (literally) elicited by the few sentences of his story! The fundamental distinctions between religion and ethics, laws of aesthetics, the nature of all moral and legal obligations, whole modern philosophies, have come into being and have matured through an interpretation of these few lines of the Old Testament.

The Biblical story of the *akedah*—Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac at the command of God—has been a wellspring for the most diverse theological commentary, from the Talmud to Existentialism. David Baumgardt here examines the various meanings that have been attached to the story, one of the great pillars of the Jewish religious tradition, and offers his own reading. Mr. Baumgardt is consultant in philosophy to the Library of Congress, and has written many philosophical works, most of them in German. He was born in Erfurt, Germany, in 1890.

Philologists and historians have again and again tried to ascertain the "true," the literal sense, "the correct and only meaning" of this

Biblical story. There is no doubt that such a critical analysis of texts and the contriving of hypotheses as to the genesis and final composition of the Scriptures are interesting and valuable. But when historians and philologists claim that they can establish a *single* exclusively valid interpretation of the meaning of any great Biblical myth, they are floundering in deep waters. Some levels of interpretation are only relevant to men as scholars, while others, directed to men as men, present truths wrested from life and preserved in the religious and poetical documents of mankind.

Indeed, it may be said that a poetical or religious document remains alive only insofar as it gives rise to new and changing interpretations according to the needs and insights of later generations. As soon as it becomes a mere topic of historical research and no longer an occasion for personal concern and personal meaning, it ceases to be living religion, living art, or living poetry, because it ceases to be experienced "subjectively," as personal emotion and insight.

COUNTLESS efforts have been made to spell out the true moral of the Abraham and Isaac story, sometimes in a rather cheap and even theatrical way. As early as about the end of the 1st century CE, the so-called *Antiquities* of Philo—which was certainly not written by that great Jewish thinker himself—added a number of touches to the original Biblical account designed to make the blind obedience of the two main actors even more conspicuous. The Bible says only that Abraham "rose early in the morning" after he had received the divine call. The *Antiquities,* however, says that after Abraham had heard the harsh divine command he "immediately . . . set forth . . . and . . . did not gainsay" Isaac. And Isaac proudly shows his firm resolve to offer himself up joyfully by delivering a long and bombastic speech to his father. For, contrary to the report of the Bible and the *Book of Jubilees,* the *Antiquities* says that Abraham had not told Isaac evasively that God would provide a lamb in time for the offering; Abraham was barbarous enough to tell his son "the whole truth," that he would be sacrificed "for a burnt offering." There is certainly a little too much easy bravura in the *Antiquities'* version of the story. Heroes who feel so little difficulty in sacrificing their sons or in being sacrificed themselves are the fancies of bookish minds.

In a similarly unconvincing way, the fearlessness of Isaac is emphasized in the *Fourth Book of the Maccabees;* here we are assured that "seeing his father's hand lifting the knife against him, Isaac did not shrink"—although the Bible does not say one word about such doubtful bravery on Isaac's part. The *Sefer Hayashar* (which even as late as the early 19th century was sometimes thought to be the book quoted in Joshua 10:13 and II Samuel 1:18, but could hardly have been written before 1100 CE) tries to "improve" on the Biblical account in the same way. It, too, frees Abraham from the reproach of having told Isaac that a lamb would be provided for the offering. And here—no less demonstratively than in the Pseudo-Philo or in the Christian *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* and numerous other post-Biblical writings—Abraham and Isaac are said to be especially cheerful, and even gay, as they go to slaughter and be slaughtered. The *Sefer Hayashar,* however, compensates for this improbable heroism by inserting at least a touchingly naive motif of filial tenderness. As he lies bound on the altar Isaac asks his father to bring his ashes, the "smell of Isaac," to his mother Sarah; but not to announce his death to her when she is sitting on a high place or a well "lest she should cast her soul after me" in the shock of her sorrow.

It is also true that in some *selihot* (prayers for forgiveness), such as an "Akedah" written by Benjamin ben Serah in Germany in the 11th century, we read that at the sacrifice Abraham felt as if Isaac were being married and that Isaac felt as if united with a bride in wedlock. But in Benjamin's "Akedah" this sort of forced beatitude is certainly outweighed by the profound feelings of contrition and anxiety that dominate the prayer.

The most detailed, though often rather tearful, glorifications of Abraham's and Isaac's heroism are perhaps to be found in old French *mystères,* in old Italian, Spanish, Dutch, German, and English mystery plays, and in Theodore de Bèze's *Abraham Sacrifiant* (1550). Theodorus Beza, the ardent follower, biographer, and successor of Calvin, devoted so many sentimental verses to the self-sacrificing spirit of the two patriarchs in his *"tragédie françoise"* that even Satan is moved by their dialogue and feels pity for them.

IT SEEMS to me that a far deeper layer of the meaning of the *akedah* is probed by those Christian interpreters who stress primarily the suffering of Abraham and Isaac rather than their unswerving courage and the rich reward their fortitude brought in the end. The Church Fathers, Irenaeus, Augustine, and especially Tertullian, already indicated that the firewood carried by Isaac on his way to Mount Moriah was the "cross" of human passion. And even the Jewish *Bereshith Rabba* compares the wood with a "cross that someone carries on his shoulder." How profoundly, however, this theme has been elaborated in Christian thought may probably best be seen in the speculations of Jakob Böhme and Sören Kierkegaard.

Böhme dedicated a whole chapter to the *akedah* in his *Mysterium Magnum* of 1623. As the Zohar had done several centuries earlier, Böhme argues that it was only in this trial that Abraham came face to face with God's rigor, and it is important that he himself was forced to exercise rigor against Isaac; for without exercising this rigor, by living only in the spirit of love, no one can "perfect himself."

Isaac is, according to Böhme, a symbol of Adam and all humanity. Humanity is tried in the fire and wrath of God. In this trial, in the fire of God, humanity must mortify its own will in order to be reborn. As all the impure substances of metal "evaporate" in fire and only pure gold or silver "subsides," so the fire of sacrifice morally purifies man; and as Abraham rose up "early in the morning" to follow the voice commanding him to sacrifice his son, so must man never postpone or evade the call to sacrifice and to repentance.

Since the days of Adam, the original union of "God's love and anger" has been "rent asunder," and this fracture has to be healed. Sin and weakness must be bound to the wood, as Isaac was bound to the wood and Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross. Only if this binding of blind self-love and vanity is carried out "in very real sincere earnestness," will it mean anything. For it would seem nothing if we did not give ourselves "wholly into the process" with all our "thoughts and mind"—if only words were said and if sins were confessed only with our lips in our coming "before the altar."

But if the true purification of self-will is carried out, then the divine spirit cries out in us: do "nothing to thy nature! For now I know" that thy nature "feareth God." In the end *"das Reich der Natur,"* the sphere of nature and its needs, cannot be rejected and thrown away. The ultimate will of God is not to impose endless self-punishment on man, eternal martyrdom and self-flagellation; the ultimate aim is the rebirth, the greater wholeness and perfection of human nature. It is in this way that trial and reward are connected in Böhme's searching comments on the story of the Old Testament.

KIERKEGAARD'S Christian asceticism, however, pays almost no regard to the reward promised to Abraham. In *Fear and Trembling,* it is the cruelty of Abraham's trial to which our attention is primarily drawn; the glory of the reward is practically ignored. Kierkegaard relentlessly stresses that the divine command, "Sacrifice thy son," enjoins the gravest immorality. Here the divine command means the command to murder and, moreover, to commit the vilest kind of murder: infanticide, and, at the same time, the most paradoxical murder: that of one's own innocent and infinitely beloved child.

Kierkegaard writes: "What ordinarily tempts a man is that which would keep him from doing his duty. But in this case," paradoxically, "the ethical, the doing of one's duty, is itself the temptation." The seeming absurdity of Abraham's case is this: if he had insisted on doing his moral duty and had refused to kill his son, he would *not* have passed the trial; fulfillment of his ethical duty would have meant disobedience to God.

Kierkegaard carefully distinguishes the conflict that is won by the moral hero from that mastered by Abraham, the "knight of faith" and the "father of faith." The moral hero has to sacrifice only his personal inclinations for the sake of something that is evidently of higher universal value. This sacrifice of personal happiness may often be very difficult and even tragic, yet it is negligible in comparison with the "fear and trembling" that must be endured in those diabolic conflicts of life in which the moral choice is not that between a clear-cut, universally acknowledged right, and an evident wrong, but a choice between two kinds of right—or the "moral" alternative between wrong and wrong. Abraham knew that it was wrong to disobey God and wrong to kill his son.

No references to universal moral laws can guide us in these dilemmas. In Abraham's case, obviously, a "suspension" of all moral imperatives takes place, since here the will to murder is explicitly praised as true obedience to God. In other words, if the story of Abraham's trial means anything, it means that when it comes to the hardest decisions of life no other human being can advise us. No longer free to wander on the broad highway of "universally valid" morality, we are confronted as solitary individuals with God alone; and no one can accompany us on our climb "outside the universal" on the "narrow . . . steep and solitary path" of faith.

It has been rightly said, and only recently repeated in COMMENTARY, that Judaism—in contradistinction to Kierkegaard's Christian teaching—cannot tolerate any ultimate suspension of morality. It is certainly justifiable to say that "if the separation of religious faith from ethical conduct is not essential to Christianity, it at least finds a much more favorable theological climate there than in Judaism."* After all, even in the *akedah,* God does not accept the sacrifice of a child in the end. But this does not mean that he did not even demand the sacrifice, as Jewish apologetics—somewhat precipitately and far too assiduously—have often assured us.

If the many modern attempts to harmonize the differences between Judaism and Christianity are so unsatisfactory, too many of the attempts to celebrate them are, alas, equally so—on both sides. If Kierkegaard's interpretation of the *akedah* is unsatisfactory because he almost neglects the final restoration of morality after its "suspension," it seems to me even less pardonable to lose sight of the truly paradoxical nature of the divine command in the Abraham and Isaac story, to overlook the "absurdity" of the moral conflict involved, and the torment, the fear and trembling endured. To explain all this away and celebrate a far too easy triumph over the amorality, the non-rationalism, the "polytheism" of Christian belief has made many a Jewish apologetic as pointless and flat as the Christian distortions of the meaning of Jewish Law.

KIERKEGAARD already answers beforehand certain modern Jewish ways of ironing out the difficulties in the *akedah.* "A trial!" he exclaims ironically—alas, it means far too little if the whole thing is got over as quickly as the word "trial" is pronounced. "One mounts a winged horse, the same instant one is at Mount Moriah, the same instant one sees the ram; one forgets that Abraham rode only upon an ass which walks slowly along the road, that he had a journey of three days, that he needed even time to cleave the wood, to bind Isaac, and to sharpen the knife." All of us know that what Abraham had to go through on his way to Mount Moriah was "just a trial," merely a trial; but *he* certainly did not know that. The farcical element in all the popular "cheap editions" of the Abraham story is, according to Kierkegaard, that they blot out the most important point in it—the "dread"—and make the happy ending intervene just as handily, just as "unexpectedly" and "easily as a prize in the lottery."

Kierkegaard also protests strongly against any confusion of this "suspension of ethics" with easygoing immorality. Jewish criticism of Kierkegaard has insisted that by the "teleological suspension of the ethical," by "the divorce of religious faith from the practice of ethical works, the content of religious life is emptied out. Each subjective thinker may replenish the cisterns from the vagaries of his own mind. There is no check on the quality of the inflow beyond the intensity of the individual's appropriation" (Gumbiner). But to this criticism Kierkegaard has already retorted: "He who believes that it is easy enough to be an individual can always be sure that he is not a knight of faith, for vagabonds and roving geniuses are not the men of faith." The true knight of faith knows only too well how "glorious" and beatifying it is "to belong to the universal," to be the individual who acts according to the universal moral law in a way morally "intelligible to all." But he also knows that now and then fate or the will of God confronts us with dilemmas in which universal moral law in the generally accepted sense of the word ceases to be a guide.

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*Joseph H. Gumbiner: "Existentialism and Father Abraham," COMMENTARY, February 1948.

If, as Jewish apologetics say far too often, Torah means nothing but "sound correctives for man's propensity towards sin," then the Torah does not teach us anything about the conflict in the *akedah,* the conflict of that solitary individual who had to choose between two sins, the sin of disobedience to God and the sin of murder. And Kierkegaard would not be wrong then in replying to his Jewish critics by saying that it is not he who has emptied religious life by the "elimination" of the ethical (he had spoken only of a "teleological suspension" of common morality), but his critics who let God become merely "an invisible vanishing point, an impotent idea," thus "emptying" basic realms of life and filling the whole of reality with the ethical—that is, the ethical in the grossly oversimplified sense of an absolute protection from sin.

BUT ARE not, perhaps, the Torah and the greatest leaders of Jewish tradition better guides through the depths of human suffering and moral conflict than the modern moralistic defenders of the Torah, better even than the greatest representatives of mere asceticism? As ancient a Jewish interpreter of the Bible as Philo can show us how to combine the emphasis on the anguished "narrative" of the *akedah* with the "purpose" of the narrative and its happy ending. In his "On Abraham," Philo explains, in the best tradition of the Jewish midrash, that "Isaac" means literally "laughter." "But the laughter here understood is not the laughter which amusement arouses in the body." It is "eupathy" of the mind. This joy the sage is said to sacrifice as part of his duty to God, thus showing in a parable that rejoicing is most closely associated with God alone, mankind being subject to grief. God, however, "fitly rewards by returning the gift [of joy] insofar as the recipient's capacity allows." Thus sacrifice and the return of joy for sacrifice are coupled in Philo.

This will to sacrifice Isaac, to sacrifice the highest joy, ranks—for Philo just as for Kierkegaard—higher than all the heroism of the great Greek patriots and even higher than Abraham's other achievements. For no pressure of custom cleared the way for Isaac's sacrifice, nor was any promise of fame and "universal" recognition held out to Abraham; the hero of this conflict had even to experience the fear of ignominy. Yet, as Philo adds far more emphatically than Kierkegaard, just because this hero was willing to bear this loneliest kind of fear and pain did he receive back his highest joy.

The Talmud, too, emphasizes that to understand Abraham one must take into account his fear of God as much as his love. His fear is attested by the text of the *akedah;* his love must—in fact, somewhat forcibly—be inferred from Isaiah 41:8. Abraham's fear and despair, his "crying aloud," is—contrary to modern moralizing interpretations—further stressed in numerous Jewish *midrashim.*

The most dramatic specification of the reality of Abraham's conflict is perhaps to be found in *Midrash Bereshith Rabba,* where Samael, the Devil, indicates in a veritable climax the different degrees of the gravity of

Abraham's temptation. With the telling wit and realistic causticity of the tempter, Samael first turns against what is possibly the weakest point in Abraham's personal moral armor, his old age, his presumptive senility. "Old man," says the Devil to Abraham, "are you out of your senses already? Are you going to slaughter a son born to you at the age of a hundred?" This argument failing, he ridicules the pious obedience of the patriarch in another way by saying to him: Would you do, perhaps, even more for God than murder your son? "Canst thou stand even more?" And only after this argument fails does the Devil advance his most devastating piece of skepticism and his most dangerous temptation by asking Abraham: "Will not God say to thee tomorrow that thou art a bloodshedder? Thou hast murdered thy son! Thou art guilty!"

The *Midrash Bereshith Rabba* adds that this trial—the conflict between "self-evident" moral law, the universally valid law forbidding murder, and God's command, in which the alternative was between two wrongs—weighed as much on Abraham as all the previous trials put together. "If Abraham had not stood this test, all he had done before would have been in vain."

Even Maimonides, who generally shuns any discussion endangering the strength of purely rational argument in his metaphysics and ethics, does not omit to indicate in his *Moreh Nebuchim* that to ask the sacrifice of one's own life or one's possessions would have been a morally rational demand on God's part; but that the divine command issued to Abraham at his trial was something surpassing all that is thought morally possible and rationally comprehensible, something that seemingly goes against the very emotional as well as moral nature of man.

SMALL wonder that an earlier Jewish thinker of the Middle Ages, Abraham ibn Daud—though he, too, was a great rationalist in many respects—went even further than Maimonides in this direction. It has been frequently said that the Bible is not afraid on certain occasions to show man engaged in a rational moral dispute with God; there is the case of Job, for instance, and there is also Abraham arguing about the number of the righteous and the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah. But as Abraham ibn Daud emphatically says in the very last sentences of his *Emunah Ramah*, in the *akedah* Abraham does not argue with God but silently obeys him, realizing that "there is no common standard by which to compare his insight with divine wisdom."

It appears to me to be most significant that Abraham behaves so silently and passively in the *akedah*. Granted, that the primitiveness of the narrator may provide some "excuse" for his having said so little about the intellectual and emotional stirrings inside Abraham. But if this is the reason, then primitiveness may here express great profundity. When such a "visitation" comes over us as came over Abraham, only charlatans can feel that they are being called on to do "great things." The true hero, when placed in a situation like that of the *akedah,* thinks only of "saddling his ass" and of going on without being in any way sure of where the road leads.

The only sign of Abraham's inner reaction, as mentioned in the Biblical story, is, grossly expressed, that he tells a "white" lie when he says to his son that God *will* choose the lamb for the burnt offering, although it had been made quite clear to him that God had already chosen a definite sacrifice—namely Isaac, his son. Kierkegaard, Rashi, and the *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer* try hard to exculpate Abraham on this point, but in my opinion they fail completely. It seems to me far more true to the text to admit what is clearly stated there: that Abraham did not tell the truth to his son.

But this certainly does not demonstrate that the Pentateuch regards the telling of a lie lightly. The Old Testament takes the most serious view possible of lying and cheating. Yet it obviously thinks that the telling of a "white" lie is not only justifiable but even morally required, if it can spare a human being the feeling of doom for even a short time. The Old Testament leaves to

St. Augustine, Kant, and Fichte the task of teaching that a lie is immoral under any circumstances. The moral hero of the *akedah* was evidently not capable of such a spectacular suppression of his paternal feelings. He could not even for a few hours inflict inner torture on his son for the sake of an ephemeral confession of truth. He was prepared to slaughter him on the ground of an irrevocable command, but he was not willing to inflict gratuitous, avoidable torment on him.

The *akedah* conveys more than anything else the impression that Abraham silently, and under pain hardly grasped to its full extent, bore the brunt of a hardly bearable destiny. He goes ahead silently and tries to do his task without the slightest sign of self-assuredness, as sincere men in the most difficult moments of their lives always have had to tread their paths alone—without knowing where the journey to Moriah would lead, with a heavy heart and even with a gnashing of teeth.

Isaac is, of course, even more in the dark and totally unaware of what is going on when he asks: where is the lamb for the burnt offering? This question becomes even more pathetic in that it reveals the gulf between his familiarity with the technicalities of sacrifice and his utter ignorance of the real meaning of the one that stands before him. With all the practical interests characteristic of his age, the lad is well acquainted with the usual routine of the service but totally unaware of the diabolic meaning that the very word "offering" takes on in his mouth when he asks his father his innocent question! Thus, too, Isaac's fate is characteristic of a situation laden with symbolic significance: that in which one is crushed as a blameless victim in a great moral conflict whose nature is entirely beyond one's grasp.

FINALLY, the happy ending, the great award! The angel's first announcement does not make Abraham's reward appear so magnificent. The angel says only that Abraham has sufficiently documented his obedience to the divine command. The angel's second announcement may be taken as a mere variant on this from the viewpoint of critical text-analysis. But the two pronouncements do seem to me of great symbolic expressiveness.

In the moments when great moral deeds are to be performed they do not appear so dazzling. And even immediately after they have been done fate simply states that the test was met, the examination passed with a satisfactory grade; the right moral decision was made in a conflict in which no fixed moral code could provide a ready-made, self-evident rule. Only the ultimate evaluation and clarification of world-history—like the second announcement of the angel—reveals the full impact of these great and lonely moral decisions. That man who once, in the throes of his most difficult inner struggle, could not find the heart to tell the truth to his own son but had to bear his blackest grief alone, silently riding on his ass into the unknown—this man has become for all times one of the shining incarnations of a great life. And in his seed all the nations of the earth shall take heart.

Once more, what does all this amount to? Can it ever mean that, in the end, Judaism advocates the complete surrender of ethics to faith, to a philosophy of life in which a non-rational "fear and trembling" is the highest value and has the final word? By no means. What Judaism, in my opinion, stands for and what we need more than anything else today is a revision of our narrow, pseudo-rationalistic notions of ethics, and a considerably revised interpretation of what ethics means in its relation to faith.

One may, I believe, say with Rabbi Gumbiner that Judaism on the whole keeps itself aligned with the best traditions of hedonism from Democritus to Bentham. That an *epikores* is an atheist in the Talmud is not counter-evidence. The Jews, the people who have in the past two millennia gone through more suffering than any others, have not idolized suffering as the highest value. Not suffering as such and in itself, but joy is for them the highest legitimate aim of man. True joy is for them more profound than pain—in this world and any world to come.

But Judaism also teaches that there are

highest joys that, in the nature of things and according to the unfathomable will of God, are linked up with suffering. These joys can be bought only at the price of pain; and the only comfort religion can give is to establish that they are worth that price.

JUDAISM has laid down a considerably body of strict moral principles—the Ten Commandments and others. These do not demand national honor and national aggrandizement, but they do demand that one tell the truth and love one's fellowmen. It might be said that Judaism considers certain moral principles self-evident and obligatory under all ordinary circumstances. But beyond even the best fixed moral rules, there is what Judaism calls the will of God. If this word is not a mere conventional phrase or a superstitious belief, then the will of God must mean something like fate, as fate is experienced by the purest energies of morally wrestling men. This will of God confronts us with situations like that of the *akedah,* where the fixed moral commandments do not become wrong, but remain silent.

But even then our ultimate moral and religious aim must remain the increase, the maximization, of joy. This aim must never become irrational or subjectively capricious. But, as in the case of the *akedah,* there are instances of the will of God that permit us to rely no longer on simple strict adherence to the Ten Commandments; we are forced to choose between two moral commandments, and the breach of either of them spells guilt. In these extreme conflicts of life, the supreme rational command to work ceaselessly for the maximization of happiness leaves to us the risk and responsibility of applying the command properly. This is certainly no elimination of ethics and even no "suspension of the ethical," if the term ethics is taken in its true and most vital sense.

I feel that I cannot kill. But I cannot dare to condemn morally him who may hate the spilling of blood as much as I do but who, nevertheless, fights and kills because, while considering all the possible consequences, he sees no other way to avoid the endless slaughter of far more innocent victims. And who can say, without wishful thinking, that peaceful methods always achieve a good greater than that which can be achieved by even the limited use of force? I may be mistaken in thinking and feeling this way. Perhaps they are much wiser who restrict the "unfathomable character of God" to his regulation of the cosmos and insist that no unfathomable sign of God can intrude upon or suspend the rigid, abstract rationality of those moral commandments that ordinarily govern our lives. The teaching of the *akedah* is, as it seems to me, incompatible with such a view of Judaism. Why in any case does the contemporary boasting about the rigor of Jewish morality and the purity of Jewish monotheism sound so strangely hollow when it tries to explain away the concrete features of that great old stirring myth of the *akedah*?

PERETZ AT HOME

A Young Writer Meets the Great Yiddish Litterateur

J. J. TRUNK

WHEN my Uncle Yosel left Kutno for Lublin, he wanted to have nothing to do with the Hasidim there, but he did bring with him his enthusiasm for Haskalah [enlightenment] and literature. In his free moments he even tried to write a Hebrew poem extolling the virtues of that heavenly daughter Haskalah and castigating the sinister forces that denied the light. The *maskilim* ["enlightened ones"] of Lublin at once recognized in my uncle a kindred being, theirs body and soul, even though he was a grandson of the greatest Polish rabbis and Hasidic *rebbes;* it was, in fact, just because of his distinguished forebears that the renegade impressed them. He was welcomed into the circle of Lublin *maskilim* and became their darling. When a Hazomer [cultural society] was organized there, Uncle Yosel naturally became cock of the walk. All his spiritual ambitions blossomed like flowers in the sun.

One day, out of the blue, I received a letter from Uncle Yosel. The famous writer Y. L. Peretz had come to Lublin from Warsaw for a lecture at the Hazomer, and Uncle Yosel had shown him my essays in *Hakol*. Of course, my uncle was not pleased at my works being published in a "reactionary" Hasidic paper, but still, it was something in print. I don't know what Peretz really said about my efforts in *Hakol,* but Uncle Yosel wrote: "Your writing has found favor in the eyes of the great writer Mr. Y. L. Peretz." I could hardly believe what I read. The letter was a terrific shock, especially since Uncle Yosel revealed that he had told Peretz I had many manuscripts, and Peretz had suggested that I visit him in Warsaw to show him my work. I thought the ceiling had opened over my head and all the angels of Heaven were beckoning to me. Peretz's name was something to conjure with. Imagine, that I should myself go to see him! It was too frightening. My awareness that Peretz's mind now contained a consciousness of my name awakened the wildest dreams, but I lacked the courage to take the daring step I so desired.

I answered Uncle Yosel immediately, saying that even though his news had put me in seventh heaven, I still could not face the idea of going by myself to Peretz, who probably had forgotten the whole business. I would come to him like a beggar at the door and he wouldn't even take a second look at me.

Uncle Yosel told me not to take after my family. He said if I would just spend an hour with Leyzer Lam, his father-in-law, he would beat out of me the old unworldly delicacies of Kutno as the dust is beaten out of an old carpet. But, knowing the Trunk family, Uncle Yosel realized he could accomplish nothing by mail: I would remain the same trembling and delicate young gentleman who would always have to be kept in hot-water bottles. Uncle Yosel decided that as soon as he could leave some of his urgent

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THE secular Yiddish culture at the turn of this century held out glamor and excitement to many of the young men who had been raised in traditional homes. Just what it meant to them is the theme of this memoir by J. J. TRUNK, who was born in Osmolsk, Poland, in 1887, and became one of the leading Yiddish writers of pre-war Poland. He came to this country in 1941, and is now living in New York City. Mr. Trunk has been at work for some years on an autobiography, *Poland,* of which the first volumes have already been published, and the sixth is now in process of publication. This is the second selection COMMENTARY has published from this work; the first was "The Portrait of a Hebraist" in the November 1949 issue. The present selection, from the fourth and fifth volumes, was translated by **Lucy Dawidowicz.**

business with the Lams, he would come to Warsaw and personally escort me to Peretz. He had to be in Warsaw anyway to purchase some books for his Hazomer library, and it would give him a chance to go to the opera. He longed desperately for good music. If I were not such a delicate mollycoddle, he said, I would spit on all the Hasidim and their traditions and go along to the opera. Only then would I realize that we live in a wonderful world with opportunities for a free and beautiful life. But no—he knew beforehand that I would not have the nerve, and who knows if I were not a lost soul altogether — unless some *shiksa* should come along to make a man of me. This is the essence of Uncle Yosel's letter, written in a maskilish, euphuistic Hebrew, cursing all bigots and reactionaries and telling me to prepare my best manuscripts to take to Peretz.

I COUNTED the hours until Uncle Yosel's arrival. Brightest hope and darkest fear took hold of me by turns. I searched through my writings to find something suitable. At that time I was already writing in Yiddish, but it seemed better to take a long Hebrew story, a sort of autobiographical novel into which I had poured all my experience, past and present. It seemed the best window through which Peretz could peer into my being.

Late one afternoon several days later, Uncle Yosel turned up. He was dressed in European fashion and seemed quite content with himself. Nevertheless, he still looked like a yeshiva student masquerading on Purim: he could not so easily efface the signs of his rabbinic home in Kutno. He had let his fingernails grow long, probably to spite God by showing that he no longer cut them every Friday as he had done in Kutno. He had to show in every possible way that he belonged more to the Lams than to the Trunks.

Uncle Yosel told me he had already bought the books he needed for the Lublin Hazomer. Last night he had been to the opera and later to a cabaret where naked *shiksas* danced and sang gay, spicy couplets. But would a Trunkian mollycoddle like me know about that? He had also learned that Peretz received visitors after four in the afternoon. I was to prepare to go with him and take along a manuscript. Uncle Yosel would stay two days more in Warsaw, and if only I were not such a milksop, he would take me to a movie and show me something of the beautiful world. He wouldn't even propose the theater: he knew I wouldn't have the nerve to take such a revolutionary step.

It was nearing four o'clock. Uncle Yosel said it was time to go.

I felt myself turning pale and my hands trembled. I wrapped my story in a newspaper and we went out.

It was just a few blocks from Grzybow to Ceglana 1 where Peretz lived, about a quarter of an hour's walk. Even today I cannot forget this most decisive walk in my life. Thirty-odd years later when I passed these streets, my heart still beat excitedly in remembrance of that earlier walk. I have never forgotten the cobblestones, a certain street lamp, a newspaper kiosk, and a dozen other details that caught my eye.

Passing the court of Twarda 10, the Hasidic prayer-house of the Alexander Rabbi, I paused for a long look inside, as if taking a desperate farewell.

We crossed the street at Ciepla and Ceglana. A tall smokestack rose from the red factory building, and opposite stood a large spacious house resembling a barracks, with lots of windows. We approached the gate. Unlike other houses, this gate was always locked, and it seemed to me pregnant with the mystery of Peretz's being. We entered a small and tranquil courtyard, in the center of which grew some trees. These trees, too, growing in the quiet of a Warsaw yard, seemed to have something of poetry and of Peretz.

Entering a side door, we came to an ancient and spotless hall stairway. Its cleanliness was like something Gentile, unlike the Warsaw I knew. The staircase was shining, narrow, and curving. It was as quiet as if no one had ever climbed those steps or even lived in the house. Everything seemed subdued to the unseen presence of Peretz. I felt my heart beating like a hammer, and I wanted desperately to put off the great moment my feet were bringing me to.

We stopped before a small wood-panelled vestibule on the second floor. A metal nameplate on the door said in Hebrew, in large characters: "Y. L. Peretz receives from 3 to 4." At the door hung an old-fashioned bell-pull.

Uncle Yosel rang the bell. The thought leaped into my mind to dash down the steps and leave my uncle at the door. We could hear the door being unlatched and then opened. On the threshold stood Yitzchok Leibush Peretz.

I had occasionally seen him at a distance. In his long black cape and soft felt hat, he had seemed quite tall. Now there stood before us a short, stout figure, with graying short-cropped hair. A long yellow mustache concealed his mouth; the ends of his mustache drooped over the corners of his lips and trembled upon his cheeks. He wore a silk smoking jacket. His shirt collar was open and revealed a short, rather heavy neck. He wore pince-nez, with half lenses. He raised his limpid eyes to us and asked in Polish what we wanted. But as soon as he recognized Uncle Yosel he changed his tone and began to speak in Yiddish.

"Is this the young man you told me about in Lublin?" he asked, looking at me. I was dressed in a long *kapote* and the traditional black serge cap. I was already growing a small yellowish beard. Peretz saw the newspaper-wrapped package in my hand and his face broke into a smile. "Come in," he said.

Peretz's home overwhelmed me; everything seemed to me full of poetry and fame. His study was a large light room, though the old-fashioned windows, set with small panes of glass, seemed somewhat countrified. In the center of the room stood large wooden bowls of full-grown oleander plants which filled the room with flaming crimson, a crimson that seemed dewy in the light of the sun pouring in. The windows of the study showed a generous portion of sky because there was no building opposite, only the tall factory chimney just opposite the window at which Peretz's desk stood. The desk itself was covered with large vases of flowers that overshadowed everything else, making it seem like a fragrant flowerbed. The walls were densely hung with drawings and photographs, including portraits of Peretz in various poses.

In the naivety of my emotions, everything contributed to my fantastic imaginings. Here the Muses really soared; no one but Peretz could live like this.

Peretz sat down at his desk and asked us to be seated. The odor of the flowers intoxicated me. Peretz pointed to the package in my hand and said, "Well, young man, show what you have."

Timidly I gave him the thick notebook. Peretz opened it, let his eyes rest upon the densely written pages, and began to read.

Silence reigned. Uncle Yosel raised his head and studied the portraits on whose strong colors the sun played. I sat lifeless. I felt as if I had given up all initiative and all will, and was overcome by a profound inner emptiness. Peretz read a little, passed over some pages, and then read some more.

At last he raised his eyes and peered at me over his half lenses. He closed the notebook and put it aside.

"You have interesting ideas like . . . (he mentioned the name of a well-known Yiddish writer), but you don't know Hebrew. You think in Yiddish and translate yourself into Hebrew. No, this has no point. Why don't you write Yiddish? Doesn't it suit you, a son-in-law of the Priveses, to write in the language of the common herd?"

I answered that I did write Yiddish, but I had wanted to bring him a bigger piece.

"No, no, bring me some of your Yiddish pieces," he said and returned the thick manuscript.

He was silent a while and then said: "I'd just like to read you something of mine which I wrote today."

He took up a large sheet of paper overlaid with tiny characters. He moved closer to the desk. His gray short-cropped hair seemed to become stiffer, and his clear eyes took on a dewy youthful brilliance. He began to read.

It was a prose poem, "Cain and Abel." I would not today rank it among Peretz's best work. But at that moment I considered it the greatest spiritual experience of my life.

Peretz's voice was unlike any I had ever heard, at once crusty and tender, metallic as gold and sweet as the subtlest honey. In this voice Peretz could express with mastery his emotions and turbulence, his longings and his unquieted temperament. He could threaten like an enraged lion and be gentle as the most peaceful dove. With good reason, he had the reputation of being a great public speaker, capable of swaying the largest crowd.

When he had finished reading, he rose from his chair. We, too, stood up.

"Bring me some of your work in Yiddish," he said as we shook hands, "and we will see."

I was dizzy when we left the apartment. But the trees in the courtyard seemed to grow more familiar.

The next day Uncle Yosel took me some place along Ujazdowskie Aleje where there were no bearded Jews in long *kapotes.* In great secrecy he led me into a movie.

I DID not consider my Yiddish writings as containing the essence of my spirituality. In Hebrew I hoped to express my intellectual moods, my introspections, the subtlety of my observations. In Yiddish I wrote about my milieu and especially my feeling for nature, which was always strong—I had spent my childhood and many months of my later life in the country. Yiddish evoked for me the fragrant fields and orchards among which I had been born and brought up. Hebrew called forth the Gemara and the intellectuality of my father's family. Hebrew was the language of the Trunks; Yiddish was the language of my mother and my Grandfather Boruch.

It had seemed most proper to present my intellectual side to Peretz, and so I had brought only my Hebrew writings. As for Uncle Yosel, no matter how much he detested rabbis and the Gemara, no matter how impressed he was with the turbulent simplicity of the Lams, he was still, at bottom, an intellectual Trunk and a grandchild of Reb Yeshayele Kutner. He reckoned only with my Hebrew accomplishments. A *maskil* to the marrow of his bones, he considered Yiddish something for the ignorant masses. Why should I come to Peretz with Yiddish when I wrote excellent Hebrew and could express myself conceptually and intellectually? Why should I tell Peretz about fields and orchards when I could show him something more elevated?

I had to rely on my own courage to go to Peretz a second time and bring him, as he had bade me, my Yiddish writings. It was a struggle and I put it off from day to day. I did not dare write to Uncle Yosel to take me again. Ashamed of my own timidity, I was afraid to appear ridiculous before Peretz. The longer I postponed the visit, the surer it seemed that Peretz would long have forgotten me, that he would not recognize me, and would make short shrift of me at the door. But at length I overcame my cowardice and resolved, come what may, to take my fate in my hands.

Going to Peretz, I relived once more all the scenes of the first visit. The cobblestones and houses on the street imprinted themselves on my mind. At the corner of Ceglana, seeing the factory smokestack and the big house where Peretz lived, I almost lost my new-found courage. I stopped. But it was now or never. I marshalled my failing energy. And there I was standing again before Peretz's door and pulling the bell.

Again, I heard the door being unlocked, and again confronted Peretz with his silk jacket and clerical pince-nez.

My face must have been very white. And Peretz must surely have noticed my anxiety, for his smile was very friendly.

"Why haven't we seen you until now, Trunk?" he asked. "Come in and take off your coat. Have you brought something in Yiddish?"

When I saw that the great man remembered my name, the burden of fear fell from my heart.

Peretz waited until I had removed my coat. Then he led me into his study. This time, too, the desk was covered with flowers and plants. A dwarfish creature, gray-haired and gray-bearded, sat at the desk, absorbed in rolling cigarettes.

"This is Yankov Dineson," Peretz said. "Get acquainted."

DINESON turned around to inspect me. To him I was a new face, a young man in a *kapote*. As for me, it was with great awe that I looked at him. This gray dwarfish man was the famous author of *Der Schvartser Yungermantchik* and of *Yosele*, a book over which I had wept a sea of tears. My mother had wailed aloud over it. And even hard-hearted Grandfather Boruch, reading it, broke into sobs and groped for a cane to beat up Berl the cruel *melamed*. More than ever Peretz's home seemed peopled with the figures of my secret dreams.

Peretz said to Dineson: "This is the young man I told you about, old man. Perhaps something will come of him."

Then he turned to me again: "Sit down at the desk and show us what you have."

I pulled a short story out of my pocket and handed it to him. It was a story about our village of Dlutow. The narrative itself was sprawling and ill-constructed; the chief thing was the landscape motif. I had described the fields of Dlutow very sentimentally.

Peretz said that though the story had many defects, he liked it very much. He advised me to go on writing similar things. "You will develop into a pastoral poet," he said. I remember that is how Peretz expressed himself. Then he took a pen and began correcting a lot of sentences, changing many words and phrases. At that time, Peretz believed that Germanic words should replace the Slavic elements in Yiddish; for example, where I had written *lonke* (meadow), Peretz substituted *Wiese*.

Then he returned the manuscript, continuing to encourage me, and said to Dineson, who had not stopped rolling cigarettes, that he hoped something would come of me. (Dineson rolled the cigarettes for Peretz; he himself did not smoke.)

"Continue writing," Peretz said to me, "and bring it to show me."

My face beamed with joy. Thinking that my audience was over, I arose to take my leave. But Peretz asked me to stay and have coffee.

PERETZ and Dineson rose and we went into the kitchen. On the way, Dineson began talking to me with intimacy as if I were one of the family, and encouraged me to keep on writing and show my pieces to Peretz.

As we sat at the table in the rather dark kitchen, Peretz talked familiarly and jokingly to the maid, an elderly, stout Polish woman who had worked for him untold years and considered herself part of the literary family. He told her, pointing to me, that this young man was a new visitor who would come frequently now, and she was to make especially good coffee for me.

I must confess that I suffered the torments of hell drinking the strong and aromatic coffee with Peretz. I knew the milk wasn't kosher.

Then I heard several shrill rings of the doorbell. Peretz went to answer it. From the corridor came the sounds of two new voices; one was high-pitched and singsong and talked to Peretz with familiarity; the other was low and harsh. Soon Peretz returned to the kitchen with the two men and introduced them to me. One was Menachem Boraisha and the other S. L. Kave. They sat down at the table, Menachem continuing to talk in his singsong voice, in a slight Lithuanian dialect. His sentences always seemed to end in midair.

The stout maid served more coffee. I felt I was in seventh heaven. For the first time in my life I was in a real literary milieu, with Jewish writers.

THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET

A Story

JAMES BALDWIN

ON THIS same avenue down which he hurried now, he had once walked with his father on bright Sunday mornings and vibrant Sunday nights. Church-goers and heretics passed them, dressed in their brightest clothes. On Sunday the sun never failed to shine; on Sunday nights the stars were brighter and the sky was a deeper blue. When they turned the corner that led to the church, they saw the lighted windows and heard, with a fierce excitement, the sound of tambourines and singing and the clapping of hands. Then they hurried to reach the house of God. So had his father lived in the Southern cotton fields; so had his mother lived before him; who, born a slave, and with no knowledge—"as men call knowledge"—yet turned, sobbing, on her final pillow, "A mighty fortress is our God." When Johnnie was very young, though he feared his father and was frightened and troubled at church, he did not doubt that the gospel his father preached, to which the church bore witness, was the truth; that under the shadow of His everlasting wings was all love and all power and the assured redemption of his soul. One wintertime, while his mother was again pregnant and his father had no job, and they lived, his mother and his father and his two brothers and himself, in two cold rooms at the top of a tenement where rats whispered behind the plaster and harlots made love behind the stairs, Johnnie had cursed God. But to curse God is not to doubt Him. His father stripped him naked and beat him until he lay on the splintery floor, in feverish sobbing and in terror of death.

IN A hospital in Long Island his father now lay dying. He had been ill a long while, but Johnnie, who no longer lived in Harlem, had never been to see him. And he hurried unwillingly now, only because his mother was ill and had called him at his downtown rooming house to beg him, for her sake, not to let his father die with only strangers at his bedside. By strangers she meant white strangers; she surely knew that Johnnie was a stranger in his father's eyes.

According to the vision of their church, in which, at length, he became a burdened hope, the son of a prophet, all that was in the world was sin. He was not allowed to go to movies or to plays; smoking and drinking were forbidden. It was not thought wise to read more at school than was absolutely necessary, for schools also, it had been revealed, might function as the anteroom to hell. One read the newspapers only to remark how exactly, how relentlessly, the Word of God approached fulfillment. From his pulpit his father warned them of the wrath to come. "Behold, in the last days there shall be wars and rumours of wars; nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom." Many an ancient throne shall topple and many a king, like Nebuchadnezzar, crawl raving in the dust. But all these things (and Amen! cried the church and once his own heart had cried, Amen!) should bring rejoicing to the hearts of the redeemed. For it meant that their trials on earth were nearly done, their salvation was at hand: in the twinkling of an eye that same power which raised Jesus from the dead would lift them from the guilty earth and, for their reward, they would triumph over death and

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JAMES BALDWIN has been called the most promising young Negro writer since Richard Wright. He was born in New York City in 1924 and is now living in Paris. His earlier contributions to COMMENTARY include an article on "The Harlem Ghetto" (February 1948) and a short story, "Previous Condition" (October 1948).

hell and reign forever with the Father and the Son. But by this time Johnnie was a child no longer, but an eighteen-year-old about to leave high school where he had read too much. What he had read undermined his faith and, equally, what his faith had been distorted all that he had read. His faith was nothing but panic and his thoughts were all confusion. Then he hated his father. He fought to be free of his father and his father's God, now so crushingly shapeless and omnipotent, Who had come out of Eden and Jerusalem and Africa to sweeten the cotton-field and make endurable the lash, and Who now hovered, like the promise of mercy, above the brutal Northern streets.

He began to backslide as an angel falls: headlong, furious, anxious to discover the utmost joys of hell. The joys of hell are as difficult to discover as the joys of heaven and are even more over-rated. He began to smoke, though it made him dizzy, and he began to drink, though it made him sick. He forced his tongue, which had shouted Hallelujah! and Praise the Lord! to use a more infernal language. The boys he knew then, in his last year at high school, were more civilized than he and more worldly. He listened to their version of the Scriptures. Yet when one of them, a boy named David, one afternoon took him to a movie (he had said very casually, Yes, I'd like to go) he sat in the dark and trembled, waiting for the ceiling to fall, for the awful light of the second coming to fill the theater, and the wrath of God, unloosed, to hurl him into the lake that burned forever with brimstone fire.

David and his father met once, just before Johnnie left home. David called for him one Saturday afternoon to take him downtown somewhere. As David, very hot and uncomfortable in the little living room, rose to leave, his father held out his hand and said, "Are you a Christian?" David reddened and tried to smile. "No," he said. "I'm Jewish." His father dropped his hand and turned away. Johnnie opened the door quickly and pushed David in front of him into the hall. When he pulled the door shut behind him he looked into his father's eyes. His father looked on him with that distant hatred with which one considers Judas; and yet with more than that, for, his father's eyes told him, he was henceforth damned by his own wish, having forsaken the few righteous to make his home in the populous Sodom and entered into an alliance with his father's enemies and the enemies of the Lord.

The conductor called out his station and he walked to the door, waiting for the train to stop. There were trees along the road he took to the hospital and a few neat, characterless houses, with here and there a hedge, clipped into a round shape, as unreal looking and as fragile as the glittering baubles that hang from Christmas trees. This was a world he might never enter, the world his father had despised. The world had rejected his father as it now rejected him. But "Fear not," his father had preached, "them that are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." When his father spoke from the pulpit one did not ask whether he spoke with the fire of bitterness or the fire of love. In the leaden days, the wintry days, in their several, precarious homes, when they were alone with no singing, and no transfiguring light made his father's head majestic, was he sad? When he wept and trembled on his knees before God in the overwhelming joy of his salvation did he also weep to see that his children grew thin and surly, that he was not always able to provide their bread? Then for the first time he tried to imagine his father lying helpless on white sheets, among strangers, being handled and ruled by strangers, his own will being set at naught.

He passed through the gates and began a half run up the walk, for suddenly he had to look at his father's face again. At the end of the walk stood the great silent building in which his father lay; silence covered these grounds and all the buildings, a silence that frightened him unreasonably.

The nurse considered him with cold, almost hostile detachment. "Yes?"

He realized that his face was wet. He stammered: "Is Gabriel Grimes a patient here?"

"Are you a relative?"

"His son."

Without a word she opened the door so that he could enter and, as he entered, locked it behind him. Then she turned and he followed her. The corridor was much longer than it had seemed when he peered in from the outside and the white pressed on his temples. The floor was white, of some material like marble, slippery and veined with gray. They opened a door and mounted a flight of steps, marble like the floor and whiter. At the top of the staircase was a series of doors, secret, dark-brown, against the pressing white. The thin fall sun crept in through opaque windows; it was like an old house in mourning.

The nurse opened one of the doors and they faced a tall man, nearly bald, who wore a white coat and gray trousers. He was standing in a very small room, which seemed to have no windows and was of a dull, smoke-like color. On the desk, in an ashtray, was a smoking cigar.

"YES?" said the doctor.

"Grimes," the nurse replied. It was as if some secret signal for his destruction had been exchanged over his head. She left, closing the door behind her.

"Have a seat," the doctor said; very kindly, so that Johnnie knew that the doctor was uncomfortable. He sat down in the soft leather chair, looking about the room for some object which would engage his attention. The doctor sat down behind the desk, facing him; he opened a folder.

"You're his oldest son?"

"Yes."

The gray-green eyes looked at him sharply. He looked away.

"You've never visited your father here before?"

"No." He coughed. It sounded obscene, diseased, in the antiseptic room. "I—I haven't been living at home."

The doctor turned back to the folder. "He was admitted here nearly two years ago. Had you left home then?"

"Yes."

"Did you know he'd been admitted?"

"Yes."

Again the gray-green eyes whipped him lightly, pursuing some conjecture of their own. Johnnie looked down at the smouldering cigar. The string of his loins threatened to snap.

"Do you know what it was your father suffered from?"

"No. I—my mother told me something—it wasn't very clear." He tried to smile; the doctor ignored it.

"It was a kind of paranoia. He was always religious, wasn't he?"

"Yes. He was."

"You're not?"

"No."

The doctor looked at him. "He may have brooded about this. You left very shortly before he was brought here?"

"Yes."

"You and he had quarrelled?"

"Yes."

"Your father stopped working and stopped preaching, stayed at home and read his Bible and prayed. He refused to eat because he said his family was trying to poison him. Your mother has told us that he would steal out of the house and buy a bag of fruit, oranges or the like, and come back and sit in a corner and eat them, rind, pulp, and all."

He said nothing and watched the doctor. The doctor picked up the cigar and put it down.

"We had a great deal of trouble with him here. When he had been here a short while we realized that he was tubercular. We did what we could—" He paused and looked at Johnnie. "He is in a coma now. Would you like to see him?"

"Yes," he said.

The doctor rose from the desk and, standing, crushed the cigar. Automatically, Johnnie rose too, bracing his shaking legs. The doctor moved to the door. "He is just down the hall," the doctor said.

He followed the doctor out of the door. He stared at the doctor's moving back and looked away, for the doctor's jacket was white and the motion made him sick. He felt that he was being slowly, irrevocably trapped.

They entered a small room, with curtained windows. There was a shaded bulb high in the ceiling. There was nothing in the room except a bed and a chair and a screen around the bed. The shaded bulb was black-gray in the socket.

"He has been quite ill," the doctor said.

He nodded, but did not move. The doctor looked at him kindly for a moment and motioned for him to follow behind the screen. He moved slowly behind the doctor. At the edge of the screen the doctor stopped; he looked at the doctor, wondering what was wrong, and realized that the doctor was being tactful. He did not feel that he should be present at the last meeting of a son and his father.

So he reluctantly stepped behind the screen. He was overwhelmed by the bed; but he did not look at the bed directly. As though he were wading in deep water he held his head very high and braced his body. He saw the white bedposts, he was aware of a body's outline on the bed; then, with a wrench, as though some strong hand had grasped the back of his head and turned it roughly, as though his father were forcing him to look down on the evidence of some misdemeanor, he forced himself to look down on the bed. There lay his father, black against white sheets.

And his gorge rose. This could not be his father. The heavy skull pressed into the pillow; the deep eye sockets pressed into the skull. The eyes were open, black, and varnished, the straight nose flared and trembled above the purple lips. The mouth was open and foam-flecked. The neck stretched like a phallic column, obscene and secret, with a very slow, indifferent pulsation. The skeleton, beneath the twin, inadequate coverings of the white blankets and the black skin, rose in sharp, sardonic edges, like blunted knives pushing through leather. The wrist was now a polished bone, the fingers were of ebony, with blue nails. From beneath the blanket a wild thigh and ankle showed. The thigh was no thicker than the forearm. All over the room suddenly there was a sick sweet sour smell.

It was his father that he watched dying; and no more would this violent man possess him; this arm would never be raised again. The ragged edge of sound which now issued from the throat would be silence soon or singing behind the far-flung stars. Now he was the man, the conqueror, alone on the tilting earth.

He felt thrown without mercy into everlasting space; or as though some door on which he had been knocking with all his weight had been, without warning, rudely opened; and now, like a two-year-old, he sprawled on his face and belly and burning knees, into an unfamiliar room, screaming with that unutterably astounded, apocalyptic terror of a child.

He moved nearer to the bed and murmured *Daddy*. And the sound stopped, the skeleton became perfectly still. Then it seemed that there was no sound being made anywhere on earth. Now communication, forgiveness, deliverance, never, the hope was gone. *He's gone to meet the Lord.*

He laughed to himself at the phrase and again he called his father. A voice said, *Here now Here now*. He felt hands on his shoulders and he tried to break away, screaming for his father. But he knew, in the awful, endless silence at the bottom of his mind, that it was himself who cried and himself who listened, that his cry would never be heard; it would bang forever against the walls of heaven and he would live with his recurring cry, the force of his anguish powerless to defeat the force of time and death. He wanted to run, to hide, to run out of the world and be forever hidden; but hands were holding him, a white face overwhelmed him, shooting out gray-green lights like signals for his destruction. He beat against the whiteness until his arms seemed bleeding in their sockets. Then the hands stapled his arms behind him; he sweated with the pain; and the gray-veined, marble floor opened up and dropped him a long way down.

They made him drink cocoa and rest and they wiped his forehead with an evil-smelling ointment. He took from their hands the brown paper bundle of his father's clothes and walked the long corridor to the door. The door crashed behind him and he ran down the walk to the iron gates which reared and glittered against the black, descending sky.

But the stars were out and the moon, a crescent, hung fanged and evil, gleaming through the passing clouds. He walked the railroad platform, carrying the bundle of his father's clothes, waiting for the train to the city. Far behind him stood the hospital buildings, sprawling and sinister and all the windows dark.

Tomorrow a wagon would arrive from the city to take his father's body away. For three days he would lie in state in a shabby velvet funeral parlor; men and women from the church would come and look down on his father and whisper and leave. They would look on his son, his oldest son, and warn him of the enormity of the danger in which he had placed his soul.

Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. He paced the platform, carrying the bundle, listening to the sharp crack of his heels on the wood. He lit a cigarette; the brief flare lit up the night around him and he held the match until it burned his fingers and then dropped it and ground it beneath his heel.

A cloud uncovered the moon again. He watched it move slowly across the sky, impossible, eternal, burning, like God hanging over the world.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

SEVENTH AVENUE: BOSS AND WORKER

Some Garment Center Portraits

WALLACE MARKFIELD

HE STARTED west from the Lower East Side and then reached a point beyond which he could not pass; this was Seventh Avenue and he settled there. Twenty or so years ago the firm name on his business stationery was simply Sam Katz, but today it is Ess and Kay. He likes the models and the office girls to address him as "Mr. Kay"—especially in the presence of out-of-town buyers.

He maintains an ornate office near the showroom, but there is nothing he hates more than the fact that he is compelled to spend so much of his time behind the desk. For no matter how long his cutter and markers have been with him, he cannot trust them. He carries a load of anxiety, wondering whether remnants are being sold under his eyes, suspicious of any employe who leaves at the end of a day with a bundle under his arm. No matter how busy he is with customers, there always comes a time during the day when he must walk nervously about the cutting-room floor, looking almost into the hands of his cutters, fearful lest he say too much, since their union is strong. Sometimes he will stand with the marker, watching him chalk the patterns on a long rectangular section of cloth. A sudden spasm of economy, and he will pick up an odd piece of chalk from the floor with a hurt look in his eyes.

Between him and the marker there is war, though never a word is exchanged. Standing over the table, the boss lifts a pattern, searches about on the cloth till he places it at a point that will gain him another few inches of material. Almost scornfully the marker will shift it to the original spot, slapping the heavy cardboard down as though it were a pinochle hand. This is a symbolic challenge, wherein the marker dares his boss to assert superior knowledge of the trade. If once again the boss picks up the cardboard pattern to slap it down with redoubled force, he is reaffirming his own judgment, taking full responsibility foı the change. Tentatively he reaches toward another pattern, but this time the marker ignores him, places his hands in his apron pockets, taking the pose that means he will walk off the floor at any moment if the ritual is continued.

In his shop there is no role the boss aspires to more than that of *paterfamilias.* When the children of his employes are married or Bar Mitzvah he will send down for *shnaps* and cookies. He himself may come to the ceremony, but even if he is not there, his check usually is. During lunch hour, for example, he will often walk over to the shipping table where the men are seated playing rummy, and deal himself a hand. It is like a meeting of a burial society or a family circle, till the hour ends and work begins again. Then

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WALLACE MARKFIELD would not claim that these portraits of bosses and workers in New York's garment center by any means exhaust the pattern—these are only a few of many types in one of the most diversified industries—"racially" and culturally—in the United States. Mr. Markfield has contributed fiction and criticism to COMMENTARY, *Jewish Frontier, New Leader, Partisan Review,* and other periodicals. He was born in Brooklyn in 1926 and studied at Brooklyn College and New York University. At present he is doing free-lance newspaper work, and he has recently begun a novel.

newspapers are thrust aside, the machines turned on again, and the transition from *landsman* to wage-slave takes effect. For in the garment center the boss translates the Calvinist doctrine into his own terms—the worker by his very nature bears a load of sin and must never be praised. No matter how honest is a man's work he will seldom hear a word of commendation, nor does he expect it. Cutters who never lift their eyes from the table, doing their job with the neatness and precision of the experienced artisan, are sneered at, compared with some real "mechanic" who always works for a rival firm. Even if it has been a good day for the boss and he is cheerful, he must walk unsmiling into the cutting room.

REMEMBERING his own origins at the sewing machine, he likes to believe he could still sit down and run off seams and pockets at a faster clip than any of his operators. But that is as far back as he cares to go. Recollections of the ghetto, the tradition of learning and Hasidism, the patriarchal family unit—all of these sentiments fall away when the boat docks and the immigrant is cast out from the steerage to assume full status as a "greenhorn." Before his first dinner in the New World is even finished, his older cousin is demonstrating the art of the piece-worker in the small room behind the shop. In the months that follow, if all goes well, he sends passage-money to his family, and soon, if his children are old enough, their hours after school are spent sitting with him, helping with the piece-work.

Phylacteries remain untouched in the morning, laid temporarily aside for a more material security, for a goal that can be achieved only by amassing a load of frugality and self-imposed suffering at a faster pace than the workers who sit at the machines next to him. The pattern is simple—first to learn the trade, lay away every penny that can be spared and even more joyfully those that cannot be spared, and then the slow wait for the "break" that will make a small business possible. Almost ruthlessly does he set himself apart from every remnant of the old culture. Especially does he scorn the *luftmenshen* whose nostalgia for the old heated arguments and longwinded Talmudic dissertations serves only to set off the sadness of their lives as they sit in coffee-shop and synagogue.

Then, when the "break" finally materialized, the garment man often found himself in the strange position of employing some of his old friends, even close relatives. Here the ties were definitively severed, and gradually another factor crept in. He, the manufacturer who had sensed what counted in this new world, could look only with a smugness that approached scorn upon fellow-Jews who seemed to accept their lot as workers. It was not only that they were Jews without money, but, more pathetically, they were Jews without *chutzpah*. In business he adopted a *pruste* attitude—a dollar was a dollar, let somebody tell him different. There was no point in disguising the fact that he was out for "number one," and he neither expected nor showed mercy.

HE FOUND that the success of one season would not necessarily avert a disaster in the next. There was no certainty in the trade, and just holding his head above water required absolute mastery of the art of "hustling." If he managed to get a large order, the delivery of the goods he needed was never on time; if he had a dozen samples made on a buyer's promise, another house had produced the same model at a cheaper price; if he was stocked up with woolens at the end of one season, gabardine was the big hit for the following year. Always on the verge of putting over a deal that would place him on Easy Street, he found himself defeated again and again by the sheer anarchy of an industry where your own shipping clerk can be quietly getting set to steal your best designs and open his own shop. A strange fatalism pervades the garment man's thinking, as in the story of the manufacturer who cannot procure woolens. Suffering from insomnia over this, he is told by a psychiatrist to try counting sheep. One night he dreams happily that he has gathered all the sheep he has counted and sheared them by the thousands, thus solving his problem. But a few hours later he wakes from a horrifying nightmare and moans—"The dirty dogs! I got all the woolens in the world, but do you think they'd let me have some linings?"

Basically his survival had little to do with business ability. He was a poor bookkeeper, a spineless bill collector, knew next to nothing about modern production methods or cost accounting, but, like a Hollywood producer, he depended less upon organization and efficiency than upon sales and ideas. What he sought was a certain tone, a style, a quality—in short, *shmaltz*. Shmaltz was the ability to look at a dress model that flopped three years ago and turn it into this season's big number simply by adding a few sequins to the bodice. Without shmaltz, he might have the most spotless of reputations, employ the best designer in the industry, use only the finest materials and handwork, but he might just as well declare himself bankrupt and place his assets under his mother-in-law's name.

THE last step toward his full emergence as garment man came with the advent of the unions, when he found himself hiring Irish and Italian strikebreakers. The mechanism had begun to function at full capacity, clogging his ears and shutting out Peretz's plea—

How can a man strike his brother,
How can a man mock his brother's tears?

But he soon found that bringing racketeers into the industry served only to create new problems. Sometimes the move was countered by the unions with other gangsters or, more often, militant squads of workers known as "educational committees." And as time passed, ironically enough the gangsters themselves became unionized, and attached themselves to the bosses like blood-suckers. In the end, the only way to shake them off was to accept the less threatening claims of the union.

The union leaders were wise to all the dirty tricks in the game and had their own brand of *"prustkeit."* Volatile and dynamic, and fully as shrewd as the manufacturer, they brow-beat him into at least a tacit acceptance of the fact that the welfare of the worker was more than a platitude that took money out of his pocket—it was a problem of industry as a whole. They set out to prove to him that with good management and rational planning, the American consumer might be educated into becoming the best-dressed citizen in the world. Across the conference table this idea was drummed into the boss by organizers, walking delegates, top-rank officials, till it almost seemed that to fight the unions would be equivalent to fighting the progress of American capitalism.

And as the unions came to dominate the industry, the old days when a man could set himself up with a little capital, three or four machines, his father-in-law as the designer, and call himself a manufacturer were over forever. The average wage, which before the first war was under twenty-five cents an hour, is now almost a dollar an hour. Today the boss finds himself cordially welcoming the business agent into his office, eating lunch with him, even recommending him to his own tailor for suits. And as it has turned out in many instances, not only is he forced to accept the union, but he might find himself going to it for favors, using its production men, time-study experts, and merchandizing analysts.

But even though the union has pardoned the manufacturer his former sins, he still enjoys a vicarious piratical image of himself (mostly imaginary) as an unscrupulous "operator," someone who can fake his books and outsmart a competitor with the best of them. He likes to recall the old turbulent days of the industry, when private detectives used to "ride shotgun" on his trucks, when he was "palsy-walsy" with gangsters. (Two of Lepke's boys used to get their suits by him wholesale.) Walking up Seventh Avenue he is able to spot a gangster from three blocks away, and if you seem impressed he will walk over boldly and ask him for a cigar. "God knows," he reflects later over the cigar, "he's a thief and a murderer and a bum—but you should see the apartment he keeps up for his mother in the Bronx!"

But despite what warmth and color his world retains, he cannot rid himself of a sense of insecurity. With another Jewish manufacturer he has no qualms about following the codes set down by a vindictive God of Business, and he will press him to the wall over a penny-a-yard difference on a hundred-yard order. But in his occasional dealing with the *goyim* it is a different story, and often, under the heading of "good will," he takes a loss that would normally make him wince. With the Gentiles he can never be quite at ease, for he is always fearful that the mask of graciousness may slip off and disclose their private image of him—a Fagin with a tape-measure. He is always, at bottom, in the position of that Jewish millionaire who invited his parents for a cruise on his new yacht. Proudly displaying himself in his "captain's" uniform he looks to them for approval. "Look, Sonny," says his mother, "by me you're a captain, by Papa you're a captain, but what are you by the captains?"

He can create no business dynasties that may be passed on to his children, for he too is infected with the disease of the Jewish middle class, and only those of his sons who are so poor in school that they cannot become professionals enter the business. If he has a daughter, he resigns himself to the fact that he must "buy" her a professional. His attitude towards this transaction is likely to be ambiguous—as one manufacturer said upon the day his intended son-in-law was to graduate from medical school: "Nu, so today he is a Buick!"

He takes pride in contributing to such organizations as the UJA and subscribing to full-page ads in charity journals. Sometimes he pretends annoyance over the fact that his name appears on virtually every "sucker" list, but no matter how pressed for time, he always manages to spend fifteen minutes conversing with telephone solicitors, secretly proud that someone recommended him as a "contact." When it comes to a theater benefit, he is always the first one approached, and he takes tickets for the Second Avenue musicals which he swears he will never use. But, as his wife points out, for a good cause it doesn't hurt to show his face, and besides, Menashe Skulnick is still good for a few laughs.

Lately he has taken to attending *shul* frequently, doing his best to pass it off as a mere social form. But somehow, if there is a new wing to be added, or some refugee yeshiva students who need a home, he is the first to contribute. On the High Holidays he bids heavily for the privilege of placing the Torah inside the Ark, and when he *davens,* without even straining himself, he can drown out the combined voices of the cantor and his choir.

II

A CUTTER for thirty years; since he's been in the garment trade, he's promised himself a little chicken farm some place near Lakewood, and for the last twenty-five years he has been taking orders for fresh butter and eggs to be filled in the future. But time passes, and the closest he's come to the fresh green earth is the little cemetery plot he pays for with his *chevra-brider*. *"A koptzen bleibt a koptzen."*

He is grateful to the union for the fact that his craft status has been strengthened year by year. But such projects as the workers' educational program, which go beyond strict trade union activity, leave him with more than a few doubts. He feels little desire to return to school or see his union compete with the colleges, and the idea of a cutter learning economics, taking lessons in painting, or attending poetry classes seems frivolous. On the other hand, if he is a member of the ACWA, he is proud of their recent "womb-to-tomb" plan of workers' benefits. He deposits his savings in the Amalgamated Bank and fills out an application for an apartment in an Amalgamated housing project.

For the past few years he has been a little in awe of the manager of his local, who has perhaps eaten luncheon (at twenty dollars a plate) with Henry Wallace, or shaken the hand of Bernard Baruch. Walking into the local office, he gazes respectfully at the autographed photos, stares at the leather upholstery, the commodious oak desk, the large murals covering the walls, and remembers the old lofts that once served for offices, the days when the only visible equipment was one or two broken-down typewriters and an old mimeograph machine. Twenty years ago there was always a possible excuse to offer the shop chairman who came at the end of the week pleading for dues; today, the union's almost impersonal systematization permits no such dilatory practices, and he knows that his union book, perhaps the most important single document he carries in his jacket pocket, must have the small stamps pasted in twice a month.

When union elections come, he votes straight down the line to retain the old leadership. To the cries of "bureaucracy!" from the "Left" opposition he responds with a tolerant smile, as though humoring a fractious child. When he does attend a meeting and listens to the perpetual challenges and issue-raising of the "Left wing," he feels even more secure—after all, every union must have its own little *communistlach* who can be threatened with excommunication or serve as the butt of good-natured jokes. For his part, he is always willing to match wisecracks with them, for Karl Marx or no Karl Marx, they can never prove to him that a summer at Grossinger's is not better than a summer at Coney Island.

The recent influx of younger men into the garment houses raised certain problems for the older worker like himself. After the war ended, the union, as any large-scale enterprise, faced the problem of taking care of its own. It set up a regular system by which veterans could be taught the trade, apprenticed, and, after a probationary period in a shop, fully enrolled in the union books. For the older worker, what was particularly astounding was the idea that anyone, especially a young man, could conceivably enter the clothing trade of his own volition. Union membership, which twenty years ago was predominantly Jewish, is now giving way to new groups—Italians, Puerto Ricans, Spaniards, and occasionally Negroes. Observing this, the garment worker is made more than a little insecure. (After all, would *they* be so generous to Jews?)

He is shocked to see the Italian workers taking their children into the shops and teaching them the trade: how can a father deliberately take his son from school and make him into a worker? Like the manufacturers, his ambition is to achieve a middle-class position which will insure his children against ever having to know the inside of a shop. So closed off and separate does he make his working life that it is not unusual that fellow-workers who have labored across the table from one another all their lives should have seen each other's children only three times—at circumcision, Bar Mitzvah, and marriage. The occasional visits a child may pay to the shop are marked by uneasiness and mutual embarrassment.

Though on the whole the garment worker wants no contact with his family when he is at work, this does not mean that the events of the working day are held back from them. At home, over the dinner table, he creates his own myth. His tales of early hardships go beyond the usual description of sweat shop conditions and the horrors of peacework. They reveal a peculiar quality of Jewish melancholy, as though the garment worker conceived of himself as paying through the nose for some unremembered sin, for which the price of atonement is an irrevocable doom to the status of a worker.

In his stories the cutter appears upon the scene as a youth, energetic and hopeful, and then finds suddenly that he has grown gray and old, that his best years have been irretrievably lost to the boss, that at least one of the occupational diseases has caught up with him—hernia, heart trouble, or ulcers—while the boss grows younger every day. And is it any wonder, he will ask, as he lays his working life across the dinner table, after starting out in the old days with the *messer,* the long knife that tore out your *kishkes* against the material? Coloring his memory of that period is always the story of some act of aggression that ends with his waving his knife or shears before the frightened eyes of the boss, tossing his apron at him, and stalking off the floor. And there is the description of the racketeer who once managed his local, the secret dangers undergone before the "Hitler" was driven out. (Will I forget how, he should rest in peace, Kornfeld had his eyes stabbed out by the gangsters?)

Long since has the cutter discarded the *messer,* but the shears remain his personal property, though he has less and less use for them except to cut occasional "singles." But he keeps them oiled and sharpened, for in the cutting-room it is only his apron and his shears that belong to him. Continued sharpening of the shears make the cutting edges narrower and narrower, and eventually useless. It is against these edges that the cutter measures out his life.

For despite the changes that have come to the clothing industry, he knows that he is still the traditional *shneider,* who, if he knows his craft well, may come to be honored with the title of "mechanic." Garment-making remains a hand industry that has been only partially mechanized, and he still does the same things in very much the same way. He still walks back and forth the length of the thirty-yard tables with his cutting machine—miles every day—while behind him comes the entourage of bundle-tier and button-puncher, and even as he finishes up one section, a team of pullers has already set up the next table for him.

At work, conversation is limited, save for an occasional *kibbitz.* Most of the talking is done during lunch hour in the streets outside the buildings, where the men pair off and exchange their views on every conceivable topic. Between twelve and one the streets of the garment center become a kind of proletarian Bourse known as "The Market," where you can take stock of conditions in other houses and present rumors concerning the trade for verification or denial. Often there are heated political discussions, with the participants ringed by a wall of onlookers as in Union Square.

And since every garment house must have its *philosophe,* its one intellectual alienated amongst the philistines, where else would he be found declaiming but in the streets? This man's working day is spent mourning the passing of a golden age of writers. He will make clear to you the fact that the hacks who are in charge of the *Forward* can never force him to change his style. If you are unfortunate enough to be collared by him, he will draw out of his hip pocket a sheath of Yiddish poetry and read it aloud—sometimes revising as he goes along—with appropriate gestures: a sigh, a slow mournful nod, clenched fists. On week-ends he frequents the Café Royale and is on the best of terms with the leading Yiddish writers. He lives under the shadow of Peretz and Mendele, and he curses Sholem Asch for selling out. Union meetings he never attends, and more often than not, as far as his work goes, he is a "butcher." But, if ever he makes a serious mistake, the other men will cover up for him. He carries his lunch to the shop and generally, as he is declaiming, holds up a sandwich in one hand. For him there is only one certainty—that his kind is fast disappearing, with no replacements coming up.

FINISHING his lunch off with an assorted bag of fruit, the *balagula* or presser leans against anything that may partially remove the weight of his body from his feet. It does not matter whether it is a hydrant, a handtruck, or a carton—he spreads himself out on any part of the sidewalk and remains fixed. When he has thrown away the bag he does not stop to speak with anyone, for he goes off to search for sunlight. No matter the weather, the *balagula* never wears a jacket. He is the genuine proletarian of the garment world, traditionally generous and "*gezunt vie a pferd.*"

The "Market" is characterized by an extreme restlessness, a frenzied attempt to cram everything into the lunch hour. Bookmakers mingle casually with the crowd, taking bets; good designers are besieged by salesmen attempting to seduce them with fantastic offers into fly-by-night firms. Around the corner, the side entrance near the freight elevator is the shipping clerks' territory. They remain in the lobby during lunch and wash down the morning with Pepsi-Cola, shooting crap with the elevator operators and the truckmen. The shipping clerk is the transient of the garment trade, emerging at the end of June with the last images of highschool graduation still in his eyes, trying—if he is ambitious—to put away a few dollars before the college term begins in September. He may belong to a small union that remains virtually powerless against the mass of shipping clerks who cannot be organized. For who can define his duties? If he is not tying packages he is carrying piece-goods into the cutting room, if he is not loading the salesmen's samples into a cab he is rearranging stock, and if nothing is left there is always the floor to be swept or the cloth-ends to be folded. His working day is a perpetual search for the moment when a cigarette can be lit, for no one knows when the fire inspector may pop in, or when the boss may wander with an assumed casualness into the men's room to assert the democracy of the bladder.

BUT "The Market" cannot be confined within the limits of the streets. It flows over into the cafeterias, where kosher and *treif* exist side by side, where the busboys hover about ready to remove a coffee cup while it is still half full. For the garment worker there is nothing easier than to move through the packed aisles balancing a roll, a piece of Danish pastry, a cup of coffee, and one of the Yiddish dailies. As soon as he sits down he leans the rest of the chairs against the sides of the table, glaring with hostility at any unknown who may foolishly expect to take a seat. And by the time he has started breaking off small chunks of the Danish to dip into his coffee he is joined by two or three associates, and the table passes automatically into their hands. They are conscious of their status as steady customers, and unashamedly protest if they are given two slices of rye bread instead of the customary three, and manifest true dignity as they de-his part, he is always willing to match wise cracks with them, for Karl Marx or no Karl Marx, they can never prove to him that a summer at Grossinger's is not better than a summer at Coney Island.

The recent influx of younger men into the garment houses raised certain problems for the older worker like himself. After the war ended, the union, as any large-scale enterprise, faced the problem of taking care of its own. It set up a regular system by which veterans could be taught the trade, apprenticed, and, after a probationary period in a shop, fully enrolled in the union books. For the older worker, what was particularly astounding was the idea that anyone, especially a young man, could conceivably enter the clothing trade of his own volition. Union membership, which twenty years ago was predominantly Jewish, is now giving way to new groups—Italians, Puerto Ricans, Spaniards, and occasionally Negroes. Observing this, the garment worker is made more than a little insecure. (After all, would *they* be so generous to Jews?)

He is shocked to see the Italian workers taking their children into the shops and teaching them the trade: how can a father deliberately take his son from school and make him into a worker? Like the manufacturers, his ambition is to achieve a middle-class position which will insure his children against ever having to know the inside of a shop. So closed off and separate does he make his working life that it is not unusual that fellow-workers who have labored across the table from one another all their lives should have seen each other's children only three times—at circumcision, Bar Mitzvah, and marriage. The occasional visits a child may pay to the shop are marked by uneasiness and mutual embarrassment.

Though on the whole the garment worker wants no contact with his family when he is at work, this does not mean that the events of the working day are held back from them. At home, over the dinner table, he creates his own myth. His tales of early hardships go beyond the usual description of sweat shop conditions and the horrors of peacework. They reveal a peculiar quality of Jewish melancholy, as though the garment worker conceived of himself as paying through the nose for some unremembered sin, for which the price of atonement is an irrevocable doom to the status of a worker.

In his stories the cutter appears upon the scene as a youth, energetic and hopeful, and then finds suddenly that he has grown gray and old, that his best years have been irretrievably lost to the boss, that at least one of the occupational diseases has caught up with him—hernia, heart trouble, or ulcers—while the boss grows younger every day. And is it any wonder, he will ask, as he lays his working life across the dinner table, after starting out in the old days with the *messer,* the long knife that tore out your *kishkes* against the material? Coloring his memory of that period is always the story of some act of aggression that ends with his waving his knife or shears before the frightened eyes of the boss, tossing his apron at him, and stalking off the floor. And there is the description of the racketeer who once managed his local, the secret dangers undergone before the "Hitler" was driven out. (Will I forget how, he should rest in peace, Kornfeld had his eyes stabbed out by the gangsters?)

Long since has the cutter discarded the *messer,* but the shears remain his personal property, though he has less and less use for them except to cut occasional "singles." But he keeps them oiled and sharpened, for in the cutting-room it is only his apron and his shears that belong to him. Continued sharpening of the shears make the cutting edges narrower and narrower, and eventually useless. It is against these edges that the cutter measures out his life.

For despite the changes that have come to the clothing industry, he knows that he is still the traditional *shneider,* who, if he knows his craft well, may come to be honored with the title of "mechanic." Garment-making remains a hand industry that has been only partially mechanized, and he still does the same things in very much the same way. He still walks back and forth the length of the thirty-yard tables with his cutting machine—miles every day—while behind him comes the entourage of bundle-tier and button-puncher, and even as he finishes up one section, a team of pullers has already set up the next table for him.

At work, conversation is limited, save for an occasional ***kibbitz***. Most of the talking is done during lunch hour in the streets outside the buildings, where the men pair off and exchange their views on every conceivable topic. Between twelve and one the streets of the garment center become a kind of proletarian Bourse known as "The Market," where you can take stock of conditions in other houses and present rumors concerning the trade for verification or denial. Often there are heated political discussions, with the participants ringed by a wall of onlookers as in Union Square.

And since every garment house must have its *philosophe,* its one intellectual alienated amongst the philistines, where else would he be found declaiming but in the streets? This man's working day is spent mourning the passing of a golden age of writers. He will make clear to you the fact that the hacks who are in charge of the *Forward* can never force him to change his style. If you are unfortunate enough to be collared by him, he will draw out of his hip pocket a sheath of Yiddish poetry and read it aloud—sometimes revising as he goes along—with appropriate gestures: a sigh, a slow mournful nod, clenched fists. On week-ends he frequents the Café Royale and is on the best of terms with the leading Yiddish writers. He lives under the shadow of Peretz and Mendele, and he curses Sholem Asch for selling out. Union meetings he never attends, and more often than not, as far as his work goes, he is a "butcher." But, if ever he makes a serious mistake, the other men will cover up for him. He carries his lunch to the shop and generally, as he is declaiming, holds up a sandwich in one hand. For him there is only one certainty—that his kind is fast disappearing, with no replacements coming up.

FINISHING his lunch off with an assorted bag of fruit, the *balagula* or presser leans against anything that may partially remove the weight of his body from his feet. It does not matter whether it is a hydrant, a handtruck, or a carton—he spreads himself out on any part of the sidewalk and remains fixed. When he has thrown away the bag he does not stop to speak with anyone, for he goes off to search for sunlight. No matter the weather, the *balagula* never wears a jacket. He is the genuine proletarian of the garment world, traditionally generous and "*gezunt vie a pferd.*"

The "Market" is characterized by an extreme restlessness, a frenzied attempt to cram everything into the lunch hour. Bookmakers mingle casually with the crowd, taking bets; good designers are besieged by salesmen attempting to seduce them with fantastic offers into fly-by-night firms. Around the corner, the side entrance near the freight elevator is the shipping clerks' territory. They remain in the lobby during lunch and wash down the morning with Pepsi-Cola, shooting crap with the elevator operators and the truckmen. The shipping clerk is the transient of the garment trade, emerging at the end of June with the last images of highschool graduation still in his eyes, trying—if he is ambitious—to put away a few dollars before the college term begins in September. He may belong to a small union that remains virtually powerless against the mass of shipping clerks who cannot be organized. For who can define his duties? If he is not tying packages he is carrying piece-goods into the cutting room, if he is not loading the salesmen's samples into a cab he is rearranging stock, and if nothing is left there is always the floor to be swept or the cloth-ends to be folded. His working day is a perpetual search for the moment when a cigarette can be lit, for no one knows when the fire inspector may pop in, or when the boss may wander with an assumed casualness into the men's room to assert the democracy of the bladder.

BUT "The Market" cannot be confined within the limits of the streets. It flows over into the cafeterias, where kosher and *treif* exist side by side, where the busboys hover about ready to remove a coffee cup while it is still half full. For the garment worker there is nothing easier than to move through the packed aisles balancing a roll, a piece of Danish pastry, a cup of coffee, and one of the Yiddish dailies. As soon as he sits down he leans the rest of the chairs against the sides of the table, glaring with hostility at any unknown who may foolishly expect to take a seat. And by the time he has started breaking off small chunks of the Danish to dip into his coffee he is joined by two or three associates, and the table passes automatically into their hands. They are conscious of their status as steady customers, and unashamedly protest if they are given two slices of rye bread instead of the customary three, and manifest true dignity as they demand an extra pat of butter. Nor do they temper their scorn of the new counter-man who dares add this to the check.

Delicatessen is a sin to eat in a cafeteria, but they cannot resist such other Jewish delicacies as *kashe pirogen,* which however invariably fail to please them, since, after all, even if it did taste like something, for what they paid for one portion their wives could make enough to feed the family. Leaving the cafeteria, it is part of the ritual for the garment man to grab a handful of toothpicks at the cashier's desk, faithfully dropping them into his jacket pocket where they decompose till the suit is sent to the cleaner.

He hurries back to the showroom, for it is during lunch hour that most of his friends and relatives drop in for the "wholesale" transactions, which of course seldom appear on the books. Wholesale in a garment house is divided into two categories—"goniff" wholesale and "absolute" wholesale. "Goniff" wholesale is for distant relatives, those that can be left to the tender mercies of the salesman, who usually splits the difference with the garment worker. "Absolute" wholesale is for the *very* immediate family, and part of the ritual involves the garment worker's swearing by his life that he isn't making a penny for himself. Not only does he bring the designer over, but the head salesman and even the boss, who must all swear that the fit is superb and the price is right. (Just stand like a *mensh* so the shoulders won't droop!) By means of some mysterious mechanism, no matter how the customer wavers, a purchase is made just before lunch hour ends, and the garment worker goes back to his machine promising himself that *positively* this is the last time.

RESTING in his modern apartment in the Bronx or the two-family house in Flatbush, the garment worker today feels himself a proletarian aristocrat; he has forgotten, or perhaps chosen to forget, the radical tradition of trade unionism. To him the very idea of being a good American is bound up with the idea of being a good trade unionist. Once a seasonal man, uncertain of the number of months he would find himself working during the year, he is today protected from the perils of the labor market by the union, whose statisticians watch all trends, keeping themselves a season ahead of him. The union is the bridge between his own handicaps as a worker and his sense of participation in American society. And whether he likes it or not he is in politics, even if it is only to the extent of showing up at a rally or a conference by order of the manager of his local.

He no longer sees his boss as the "capitalist cockroach" of the sweat-shop days: the typical cartoon in a union paper would show a foreman carrying a prostrate employe into the boss's office: flicking his ashes over the rug, the boss says coldly, "Well, if she's a piece-worker, give her the afternoon off;" another cartoon shows the boss standing over an operator who has just run a sewing-machine through his finger and benevolently saying, "Don't worry, Harry, I'll get somebody else to finish off the dress."

Today the garment worker no longer need fear the boss of the Art Young or Redfield cartoon. Instead, the boss, as the garment worker conceives him, is simply another human being who must be taught by stalwart trade unionists that his best chances for success lie in a closed shop and a union label. If the manufacturer deviates from this idealized image, it must be demonstrated to him not only that he is helpless against the union, but that his attempts to evade union rulings are wholly irrational. For the manufacturer, no matter what his vices, is still a Jew. The farther he has strayed, the greater joy is there over his return, and, like Irving Davidowsky in Asch's *East River,* at the eleventh hour he will always sign with the union and become reconciled with his people. It is the basic acceptance of this myth which lends a peculiar warmth and color to the garment world, distinguishing it from the rest of American industry.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

ADAM AND EVE AND THE SERPENT

Selections from the Sefer Ha-Aggada

THIS is the third of a series of translations from the Bialik-Ravnitzky *Sefer Ha-Aggada*. Previous selections from the *Sefer Ha-Aggada* ("Men and Women" and "The Creation") appeared in the July and January issues.

The Aggada is made up of stories, dialogues, homilies, sayings, proverbs, fables, and riddles scattered through the Mishna and the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, as well as other sources. The Bialik-Ravnitzky edition of the Aggada, which appeared in six volumes from 1908 onwards, and from which this translation was made, was the fruit of research into the numerous traditional collections of Aggadic sayings by the famous Hebrew poet and his scholarly patron. It was created with the needs of the modern Hebrew-reading and Hebrew-speaking generation in mind and intended as a popular, literary folk-collection rather than an archaeological or scholarly monument. It has become one of the most popular modern Hebrew books. The translation is by Hilda Auerbach.

AND GOD SAID, LET US MAKE MAN (Gen. 1:26).

With whom did he take counsel? Said Rabbi Ami: With his heart. This may be compared to a king who built a palace with the aid of an architect, he saw it and it did not please him, to whom should he complain —if not to the architect? Thus, "it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6).

Said Rabbi Berachyahu: At the time when the Holy One, Blessed Be He, came to create the first man, He saw the wicked and the virtuous proceeding from him, said He: If I create him—the wicked will proceed from him; but if I do not create him—how will the virtuous proceed from him? What did the Holy One, Blessed Be He, do? He removed the wicked ones from the range of His vision and, causing the quality of mercy to participate, He created him.

Said Rav Acha: When the Holy One, Blessed Be He, thought of creating Adam, He consulted with the ministering angels. Said He to them: Let us make Adam. Said they to Him: What will this Adam be like? Said He to them: His wisdom will be greater than yours. What did He do? He gathered together all the cattle and the wild animals and the fowl and made them pass before them. Said He to them: What are their names? And they did not know. After he had created the first man he gathered together all the cattle and all the wild animals and all the fowl and made them pass before him, said He to him: What are their names? Said [Adam]: This should be called an ox, this should be called a donkey, this a horse, this a camel, this a lion, this an eagle, and so forth with all of them. And what is your name? Said he: I should be called Adam. And why? Because I was created of the earth [*adamah*]. And I, what is my name? Said he: You should be called the Lord. And why? For you are the lord over all of your creatures.

Rabbi Meier used to say: The dust of which the first man was made was gathered from all over the world.

Said Rabbi Levi bar Chayta: If a king of flesh and blood builds himself a palace and puts the sewer in the doorway it is not proper, but if the king of kings of kings, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, created Adam and put his sewer in front—it is his pride and his glory.

For this reason was Adam created alone—to teach us that whoever destroys a single soul in Israel causes it to be said of him: it is as if he had destroyed the whole world, and whoever preserves a soul alive in Israel causes it to be said of him that it is as if he had preserved the whole world; and also for reasons of keeping peace among mankind, so that one man will not say to another: My father is greater than your father; and so that the heretics will not be able to say: There are many powers in heaven; and to proclaim the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed Be He, for if a man stamps several coins with a single stamp they all resemble each other, but when the king of the king of kings, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, stamped each man with the stamp of the first man, then not one of them resembles the other. Thus everyone is bound to say: The world was created for me.

And why do not their faces resemble each other? So that a man, seeing a beautiful dwelling or a beautiful woman, shall not say: That is mine. Said Rabbi Tafdai for Rabbi Acha: The angels were created in the image and the likeness [of God] and they do not increase and multiply, and the earthly creatures increase and multiply but were not created in the image and likeness. Said the Holy One, Blessed Be He: Behold, I shall create him in the image and the likeness, like the angels, but to increase and multiply like the earthly creatures. And Rabbi Tafdai said for Rabbi Acha: Said the Holy One, Blessed Be He: If I create him like the angels he will live and not die, but if I create him like the earthly creatures he will die and not live—therefore behold I shall create him partly like these and partly like those—if he sins, he shall die, if not—he shall live.

BUT FOR ADAM THERE WAS NOT FOUND ANY HELPMEET FOR HIM (Gen. 2:20).

For the cattle and the wild animals and the fowl had been caused to pass before his eyes, pair by pair. Said Adam: They all have partners and I have no partner!

And why did He not create her earlier? This was because the Holy One, Blessed Be He, saw in advance that he would complain about her in the future, therefore He did not create her until he asked for her. As soon as he had asked for her—immediately "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam" (Gen. 2:21).

Said Rabbi Hanina, son of Rabbi Aidi: as soon as Eve was created, Satan was created with her.

Said the emperor to Rabbi Gamaliel: your God is a thief, for it is said: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep . . . and he took one of his ribs" (Gen. 2:21). Said his daughter to him: Let him be, for I will answer it. Said she to him [to the emperor]: Let me have a judge. Said he to her: Why should you? [Said she to him]: Robbers fell upon us at night and took a jug of silver from us, leaving us a jug of gold. Said he to her: Would that they would fall upon us every day. [Said she]: And was it not good for the first man when a rib was taken from him and a woman given him to serve him?

AND BROUGHT HER UNTO THE MAN (Gen. 2:22).

This teaches us that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, acted the part of the friends who bring the couple to the wedding canopy.

Said Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Simon: Michael and Gabriel acted as the friends who bring the couple together at the wedding.

Said Rabbi Hama bar Hanina: Do you think that He brought her to him under a carob-tree or a sycamore tree [like any passer-by in the field]? Instead, only after he had ornamented her with twenty-four kinds of ornaments did He bring her to him, for so it is said: "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering" (Ezek. 28:13).

Said Rish-Lakish: From the time of her creation she has always been in a dream.

NOW THE SERPENT WAS . . . SUBTIL (Gen. 3:1).

The serpent took counsel with himself and said: If I go and say it to Adam—I know that he will not listen to me, for the man is always more difficult to sway; but if I go to Eve, I know that she will listen to me, for women always are more pliable and listen to everyone.

FOR GOD DOTH KNOW (Gen. 3:5).

Rabbi Yehuda Disikhnin said for Rabbi Levi: He began to calumniate his creator. Said he: He ate of this tree and created the whole world and then He said to you: Thou shalt not eat of it—so that you may not create other worlds, for every craftsman hates his fellows. [And he also said]: Everything that has been created after another creature is lord over that creature, and Adam was created after everything—to be master over everything, go then and eat so that He may not create other worlds to rule over you.

The serpent went and touched the tree with his hands and his feet and shook it so that its fruits dropped to the earth. The tree began to shriek: Wicked one, do not touch me—"Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me" (Ps. 36:11). The serpent went and said to the woman: Behold, I have touched the tree and I have not died, you, too, can touch it and not die. So he pushed her and she touched it. Then she saw the angel of death coming towards her and said: Alas for me, now I shall die, and the Holy One, Blessed Be He, will make another woman and give her to Adam. Immediately "she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband" (Gen. 3:6). Said Rabbi Ayvu: She squeezed grapes and gave of them to him. Rabbi Simlai said: She came to him deliberately. Said she to him: What think you, that I should die and another Eve be created for you—"there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccles. 1, 8), or that I should die and you sit by yourself at ease—"he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Is. 45:18). Rabanan said: She began howling at him with her voice, thus it is said: "And unto Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree" (Gen. 3:17).

AND THE WOMAN SAID UNTO THE SERPENT (Gen. 3:2).

And where was Adam at the same time? Abba bar Guria said: He was sleeping, the scholars say: The Holy One, Blessed Be He, took him around the whole of the earth and said to him: This is a place for planting, this is a place for sowing.

CURSED IS THE GROUND FOR THY SAKE (Gen. 3:17).

Why was it cursed? Like a man who says: Cursed are the breasts that nursed you.

Rabbi Yehuda bar Elai said: The fruits [of the tree of life] were grapes. For it is said: "Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter" (Deut. 32, 33)—those clusters brought bitterness into the world.

Rabbi Yosi said: They were figs. This you may learn from the context. This may be likened to the parable of a prince who disgraced himself with one of the serving-maids. When the king heard, he threw him out of the palace and he used to go about from one door to another of the serving-maids and they would not receive him, but that serving-maid with whom he had disgraced himself opened her doors and received him. Thus, when the first man ate of that tree, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, drove him out and expelled him from the garden of Eden and he went about from tree to tree and they would not receive him (and what would they say to him? Said Rabbi Berachyahu: Look at the thief who stole the knowledge of his creator, "Let not the foot of pride come against me," the foot which set itself up over its creator, and "let not the hand of the wicked remove me," do not take a leaf from me) but the fig tree of whose fruits he had eaten opened her doors to him and received him, for it is said: "And they sewed fig leaves together" (Gen. 3:7).

They said, for Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: God forbid, but the Holy One, Blessed Be He, did not reveal and will not reveal that tree to anyone, for He had pity on Adam's honor.

Our masters taught: The primeval serpent desired what was not proper for him. What he wished for was not given him, and what he had was taken away from him. Said the Holy One, Blessed Be He: I said that he would be king over all the cattle and the wild beasts and now "thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field" (Gen. 3:14). I said that he would walk erect but now "upon thy belly shalt thou go" (Gen. 3:14). I said that his food would be like Adam's food, and now "dust shalt thou eat" (Gen. 3:14). For the serpent had said: I shall kill Adam and take Eve to wife—and now "I will put enmity between thee and the woman" (Gen. 15).

Our masters taught: On the day on which the first man was created, after he saw the sun set he said: Woe is me, because I corrupted the world it is darkened and everything will return to chaos, and this is the death that has been decreed for me from heaven. He was sitting there, fasting and weeping all night and Eve was weeping with him. After the dawn had risen he said: It is merely the way of the world, and he stood up and sacrificed a bull.

ON THE HORIZON

FRANZ WERFEL: REPORTER OF THE SUBLIME

"He Presented Local News of the Kingdom of God"

HEINZ POLITZER

IN A review of Franz Werfel's poems, 1908-1945, Erich Kahler wrote (COMMENTARY, February 1948): "Franz Werfel was a bad author and a great poet. . . . His novels and plays show neither the spontaneous purity of a naive nature nor the achieved purity of an artistic conscience. . . . The poems [however] reveal his inner history, that childlike quality, that openness to the world. . . ."

But Franz Werfel's greatness lies precisely in the unbroken unity of his statement. In his last collection of poems, on which he was working at the time of his death, he included incredibly vulgar verses from his early work; while parts of his novels, the conversation with the bathmaster in *Barbara,* Stephen's journey in *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh,* the "most important moment of his former life" in *Der Stern der Ungeborenen* ("The Star of the Unborn"), and nearly all his short stories, particularly *Das Trauerhaus* ("The House of Mourning"), have a ballad-like force and density that will preserve them from old age and death.

FRANZ WERFEL, a writer of enormous talent who yet fell continuously into the second-rate, remains one of those enigmatic figures who seem to represent not so much a literary tendency as the very problem of being a writer in the modern world. Here a new glimpse of Werfel is offered by the critic and poet **HEINZ POLITZER**, who has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY. Mr. Politzer, born in Vienna in 1910, is now a member of the department of German at Bryn Mawr College. This article has been translated from the German by Ralph Manheim.

The phenomenal unevenness of quality evident in Werfel's work as a whole cannot be explained by the diversity of genres. It is more readily imputable to Werfel's nature, to an exuberant boyishness that surrendered itself wholly to every possible source of inspiration, and to his journalistic dependence on his subject matter. Werfel gave himself, half as an enthusiast does to the thing he loves, half as a reporter to the thing he must deal with professionally. This twofold passivity on the part of his overflowing talent accounts for both the high and the low points in his work.

Was he, as Mr. Kahler says, lacking in "that ultimate honor and honesty which are the premise of genuine artistic devotion"? No, he possessed them to excess. He never dissembled, either in his person or in his works.

The comedian and journalist in him were authentic and superior. In his soul, playful improvisation dwelt side by side with the tragic and religious; fear of the teacher dwelt close by the fear of God, and since they were combined in this very living and very creative man, it is not fitting to weigh, measure, and turn them against each other.

Franz Werfel was a good *and* a bad writer, a little boy and a whole man. He reported his life in these times as faithfully and as falsely as few writers have done. He was a mystical reporter, a traveler and explorer in that unknown country which he once called "inwardness," and precisely because his report is so often distorted by the immediacy and formlessness of direct perception, it attests the existence of an inner realm, the realm of the soul.

A RECENT volume* of selections from early and for the most part forgotten or unpublished prose works by Werfel, put together by Adolf D. Klarmann with perspicacity and love, includes a sketch entitled "Cabrinowitsch." Cabrinowitsch was one of the assassins of the Austrian heir-apparent in Sarajevo; on his hands, he had the blood of the First World War. Werfel, a youth of twenty-five reluctantly wearing uniform, saw the prisoner, tormented and sick to death, before he was shipped off to his certain end in the dungeon of Theresienstadt. "This face up in its cell, this kindness that has even ceased to be painful, this oblique friendliness, this transfigured weakness—I was shaken by the realization that this was the miraculously withdrawn face of *the very last of men,* of him who is thrust from the midst, who stands at the outermost edge of humanity. In these lost features, not otherwise than in the face of a hero, I discerned the beauty and dignity, the fatal, unthinkable loneliness of him who can never return to the midst of men. . . ." And: "All looked upon the shrunken aristocratic face with the darkly tranquil eyes, there on the bier. And into their rough souls the mystery penetrated. The men stood stiff at attention, embarrassed as though a superior were among them. A lamb had been charged with the guilt. This being will receive nothing more, not even a human death. And for that reason it towers over them all."

Here we have the whole of Franz Werfel: the sharp realism, accompanied by the evil eye of the born epic poet; the courage, the foolhardy courage of the ageless schoolboy, with which he plunged from reality abruptly into the depths of the mystery; the immediate juxtaposition of surface and inner meaning; the love and sympathy, the pathos; and finally a stylistic bravura so great as to cast a doubt upon the authenticity of the vision. Ordinarily the seer pays with his blood for his vision. But to Werfel visions were given in superfluity, as melodies were given to such composers as Mozart and Verdi. What was not given to Werfel was the strict measure of music, he did not mold what he saw, and the grace that befell him did not re-create him. He reported only what he observed, in a melody all his own that runs equally through his lyrical and his epic work.

He was a sublime reporter and he took over certain elements from the tradition of Austrian journalism whose last great representative, the satirist and pamphleteer Karl Kraus, was first his teacher and then his embittered enemy. It was from Austrian journalism that Werfel learned the art of the headline—the titles of his novels, as of each single one of his poems, are cabinet pieces of summation—it was here that he learned the sudden eruption of the narrative without preparation or exposition; the blurred ending, behind which stands the question mark of mystery, the mystery of a man or of all creation; the *bon mot,* through which, as through a crevice, one perceives the abyss; the strange fusing of psychology and musicality. But he also took over certain weaknesses of this essentially ephemeral genre: a certain flatness of perspective accompanied by a heavy laying on of color to simulate depth; the point for the sake of the point; a tendency to heap up words; a weakness for digression, and longwindedness; the obtrusive "I." From the riches of the Austrian tradition and the abundance of his own imagination, he gathered at random; he had all he could do to keep pace with the flow of his own fancy; and so he had little time for arrangement and little energy for discipline. Even in his poems he was a reporter; but when in the course of a novel he paused and reflected, he became a great poet.

HE WAS a reporter also in his highly developed flair for the "interesting" and his gift for presenting it. As Erich Kahler noted, the story of his solemn vow with which Werfel introduced his *Song of Bernadette* was pure fabrication and showmanship. Nor did this most sociable of men ever suffer from the loneliness and seclusion of the modern creative artist, of Kafka or Joyce. There was always a banquet or an audience round him, whose applause he eagerly awaited. Franz Werfel was a festive, public phenomenon. Even when he was in exile and fatally ill, he collected people as a little boy collects butterflies. And this public, festive quality was another part of his Austrian heritage: Franz Werfel, the Prague Jew whom Hitler's laws drove half around the world, bore in the depth of his being the imprint of the Baroque style that is preserved, gleaming and luxuriant, in the churches and palaces of his native land. Like Baroque literature, his work made a public affair of faith, of the mystery of life and death, of ecstasy and repentance—did this by the seduction of words, the melody of language, by the modern dexterity with which he reported metaphysical problems and experience. And like the Baroque language, his, too, with all its elaborate display, is fundamentally without structure.

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* *Erzahlüngen aus Zwei Welten. I. Krieg und Nachkrieg.* ("Tales of Two Worlds." Volume I: War and Postwar.) By Franz Werfel. Edited by Adolf D. Klarmann. (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag.)

Often he was aware of the faultiness of his style. Then he attempted to lend significance to his own weakness by giving music the pre-eminence over language, by declaring the wordless to be the home and the salvation of his poor, weak word. *"In einem Felsengrab, Das aus Musik gehauen ist, Möcht ich einst schlafen gehen,"* he writes in a late poem. ("Lay me to rest in a mountain grave carved out of music.") And in a fragment of a novel, *Black Mass,* written in 1919, he wrote: "Is song not the most sacred symbol of the lonely dialogue between God and man? The word bows down before music as a convict sentenced to life imprisonment bows down to a lonely ray of light in his cell at noon. The word is a poor sinner, confined to the prison of statement, but song, strong as a Samson, shatters the pillars of his house and raises the poor sinner aloft with unconquerable arms."

Like all attempts at interpretation, this one has a certain apologetic quality and sidesteps the inner contradiction it set out to explain. With a style in which there is much local Prague jargon, much of the heritage of Viennese journalism, and a last gleam of the Hapsburg empire, of Maria Theresa no less than of Franz Joseph I, Franz Werfel was destined to plumb the depths of the modern soul.

Was he a Jew, a Catholic *extra muros,* a Russian Christian on the model of Dostoevsky? An answer would be meaningless. In a godless day, he presented local news of the kingdom of God. In this sense, his work is deserving of all honor.

THE STUDY OF MAN

WHAT SOCIOLOGY KNOWS ABOUT AMERICAN JEWS

Many Problems, Some Studies, Few Conclusions

NATHAN GLAZER

THE sociology of Jews—like a good part of sociology in general—has developed out of the ideological and practical needs of various social and political tendencies. Sociological investigations in Europe went hand-in-hand with a program—Zionism or Diaspora nationalism. Jewish sociologists pointed with alarm to a growing rate of intermarriage, a falling birth rate, an ageing population, an "unbalanced" occupational distribution. They apprehensively traced the demographic traits of the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe, for these latter were beginning to exhibit tendencies to the same decline that was already far advanced in Western and Central Europe. Sociology in Palestine—as far as the outlines of such a discipline can be discerned—is equally problem-minded, but it replaces alarm and apprehension with satisfaction, figuratively flexing the muscles of its Jews to show how normal they are. It counts the number of workers and farmers, and demonstrates the social and psychological health of the young people.

Thus the sociology of Jews has been animated, and undoubtedly colored, by specific preoccupations and political moods, whether of alarm, apprehension, or satisfaction. To be sure, as already suggested, almost all sociology arises from similar preoccupations and interested or practical motives. However, sociology at its best does seem to require that its animating moods precede or follow political and practical involvements at some distance, rather than accompany them; it seems also to require an appreciation of the complexities of human society, in which simple solutions generally solve nothing.

The sociological study of American Jews should help us to find the answers to many of the questions about the nature of Jewish life that are continually being raised in private and public discussion by Jews and non-Jews. However, as Nathan Glazer here points out in this review of the field, it has as yet realized only a very small part of its potential. Examining the relatively small number of studies available, he tries to suggest why they give only partial and incomplete answers to most of the questions. This is the first of two articles on this subject; in a later article, Mr. Glazer will discuss studies of Jewish communities. Mr. Glazer is an assistant editor of Commentary.

One group of Jewish sociologists—roughly defined, the Yiddish-speaking ones of Eastern Europe whose most important scholarly expression was, and is, the Yivo—lived in a Jewish environment that was hopeless enough from any practically political point of view to permit a great sociology: objective, analytical, and pursued for its own sake. They could not point to too much in the way of results before their world was destroyed; and while their efforts to continue in America have indeed produced, in such work as the Yivo autobiography contests (see Moshe Kligsberg, "The Golden Land," Commentary, May 1948), some of the most interesting Jewish sociology in America, one feels that this is but little compared with the sociology they might have produced in Eastern Europe.

The Jewish sociology of Europe and Palestine has been a sociology of numbers, rather than of concepts and ideas. Of course, all sociology might well be seen as an enterprise that tries to give mathematical form to social concepts, even though a good part of sociology is forced to satisfy itself with only a symbolic or partial measuring of its concepts. (The tendency of most recent years has been to become impatient with concepts—like "anomie" or "alienation," or "Protestant ethic" or "class," or "acculturation" and "assimilation"—and to go out and reduce them to numbers in short order. This endeavor has not been notably successful: few authorities are satisfied that we have good mathematical measuring scales of the most important concepts in sociology.) Yet, viewing the wide range of possibilities between a conceptual sociology without numbers and a numerical sociology without concepts, there can be little question that European Jewish sociology—as is perhaps inevitable in any sociology so closely linked with such practical problems as the possible loss of identity and disappearance of the Jewish group, the efforts to insure its survival, and comparisons with non-Jewish groups—tended toward the latter pole. Its concepts were relatively few and simple: assimilation, survival, normalization. It was the task of sociologists to translate these into numbers, and since government statistics in Europe and Palestine obligingly differentiated Jews from others, this was no great problem.

Now this form of sociology, as it was pursued by Arthur Ruppin, Liebman Hersch, and Jacob Lestchinsky, was rendered impossible in America by one simple yet overwhelming fact: The American census does not separate Jews from non-Jews, nor are they separated in most sets of statistics.

Perhaps this fact need not have been so overwhelming, had our ideas of what a Jewish sociology should be, been different. However, the major concerns of Jewish sociology involved just this matter of comparing Jews with non-Jews. Zionists and Diaspora nationalists were interested in showing how unique the Jews were, how special their problems, how weak economically and socially, how threatened by intermarriage and assimilation. Similarly, the "defense" interest—the need, increasingly felt in recent years, to protect Jews from the attacks of their enemies—required evidence to demonstrate that the Jews did not control industry, and that they included the proper number of bankers and manual laborers.

In either case, obviously, relative numbers as between Jews and non-Jews were essential, even though in America "non-Jews" included Negroes, old immigrant groups from certain countries, and new immigrant groups from others—each of which, if they were statistically crystallized out of the homogeneous mass of "non-Jews," might show as unique traits as the Jewish group.

But in America—whether one's interest is animated by intellectual curiosity or the needs of practical polity—one must soon face the fact of the sheer unavailability of the kind of well-kept series of statistics needed to test or establish the basic generalizations of interest to "nationalists" and "defensists." The inability to use the census literally cuts the ground from under the old type of Jewish sociology, so that its few American products float about in a kind of uncharted limbo.

The lack of census data deprives us not only of exact information about the total number of Jews in America and related demographic material on age groups, marital status, and so on. A census gives us much more than that. It provides a great deal of economic information, facts about education and migration, and other social data, and it permits us to get all this information for very small areas—not only cities, but neighborhoods and parts of neighborhoods within cities. Even more important perhaps, it permits us to calculate *rates*. In many cases we can get from various sources absolute figures on Jews for given areas and given behavior patterns—let us say, the number of Jewish delinquents, or students, or users of libraries, or Jewish criminals and insane. But we can deduce very little from these figures unless we can translate them into a rate or percentage, and for this we need a figure for the total number of Jews or non-Jews in a given locality or age-range.

And finally, the census permits a historical depth. We can compute rates for every ten years, and sometimes oftener, and trace the social development of an entire group, or parts of it.

All this is out of the question for the study of American Jews. Jacob Lestchinsky, Nathan Goldberg, and a few others with more European training have made heroic and ingenious efforts to make good the lack of these fundamental statistics: they extrapolate from immigration statistics alone, which did list "Hebrews," they try to make "Russians" in the census reports do for Jews, and so on. They have ransacked the official statistics for clues—and turned them up—in ways American-trained social scientists would hardly think of. But adding up all possible clues and leads, their work remains fragmentary and only a shadow of what it was in Europe.

THE census, of course, is not all there is to sociology. American sociology in particular has emphasized a variety of special approaches that are relatively independent of the census. The materials used in such studies are autobiographies, family histories, the records of organizations and of the facts of community life: each of these kinds of data could reveal particular patterns of Jewish life in America, could exhibit certain formal sociological concepts and ideas—like acculturation or assimilation, or the conflict between two cultures, or a rise in social status.

This type of work has a rather different character from that based on the census or other statistical data covering an entire field. The study of a family "illustrates" a case of rapid occupational changes: a set of statistics on the proportions of Jews in different occupations over a period of time would "prove" it. Yet both types of study are revealing, and one does not replace the other. We want to "know" the truth in intimate living detail, as well as in broad statistical outline. (It is the second, obviously, that is also more useful politically.)

This "illustrative" and intensive sociology has produced the best in American sociology—such as the Lynds' *Middletown* and Thomas' and Znaniecki's *Polish Peasant in Europe and America*—but it has not been used to expand our knowledge of American Jews. There are a half-dozen small community studies—and that is about all. There are no full-length studies of Jewish personality, no full-length studies of the Jewish family, no full-length studies of a Jewish community—though a few of the studies do come close to it. Magnificent work of this sort has been done on the American Negro—Davis and Gardner's *Deep South*, Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, Drake and Cayton's *Black Metropolis*, Davis and Dollard's *Children of Bondage*. But American Jewish sociologists have not turned their efforts to their own group. Robert E. Park, the Chicago sociologist who exercised an enormous influence in the 20's and 30's and who was in very large measure responsible for American sociology's interest in race and ethnic groups, is said to have sent his Negro and Jewish students back to the milieux from which they were escaping: presumably he felt it would do American sociology good because these students would do their best work among the social groups they knew best. But one slim volume, Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto*, was all that this ferment in Chicago produced for the Jews.

THERE is yet another type of sociological investigation that is independent of the census—indeed, far more independent than that we have just discussed—and which is potentially capable of throwing light on Jews. I refer to speculative efforts to understand a social type or group or relationship, not by empirical investigation, but by trying to grasp what is essential to the phenomenon, what is logically implied by its nature; this is disdainfully referred to as "armchair sociology" by American sociologists. This type of sociology has two important functions: It creates an arsenal of concepts and hypotheses to guide the more empirical-minded sociologist in a concrete investigation; and it synthesizes in general conclusions the information that accumulates from empirical investigation, historical research, and all the work of the various disciplines concerned with man's social life.

A good part of what can be called the sociology of the Jews falls into this category. One writes of the "urban type," or the "stranger," or the "marginal man," or the "pariah," or a variety of possible social types—and brings in the Jews as an example. This has been done by European sociologists in particular, but it is also not uncommon among American sociologists.

What do we learn about Jews from this? It is very hard to say. When someone as erudite and penetrating as Max Weber creates an ideal type—this is what this type of sociological activity results in—a great variety of different phenomena are illuminated, understanding combines in a coherent pattern what before seemed to belong to many different realms, knowledge is in some way expanded. When someone with the amount of knowledge and insight of the average graduate student in the social sciences applies what is referred to as Weber's "method of ideal types" in an attempt to clarify some problem, the result is naturally puerile, and it becomes clear that Weber's method must be used by men like Weber.

It would be unfair to dismiss in this way much of the serious thought that has gone into the effort to understand Jews and their peculiarities by sociological speculation. There is one concept in particular that has been developed in this way, a creation of the Chicago school, which seems peculiarly appropriate to the situation of the Jews. This is the concept of the "marginal man," the man who lives in two cultures—because he is a Eurasian, a half-caste, a mulatto, or a Jew. It was developed in a few essays by Robert E. Park (see the collection of his essays just published by the Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois: *Race and Culture*), it was spelled out further in a full-length book by Everett Stonequist (*The Marginal Man,* Scribner's, 1937), and it was applied by Mr. Stonequist directly to the situation of the Jews in an essay published in *Jews in a Gentile World* (Macmillan, 1942; edited by Isacque Graeber and Steuart Henderson Britt: this is as yet the best book on the sociology of the Jews published in America).

Presumably such concepts are, for some problems and to some extent, helpful. Yet it is my feeling that, in their application to Jews in America, they have not yet been too helpful. Thinking in terms of "ideal types," one surreptitiously falls into the attitude of seeing all Jewish history, and all Jews, as one, and fails to take seriously into consideration the unique sociological character of Jews in America—and it is unique, as every stage of history is unique. The facts themselves, few as they are, are more complex and varied than the developed concepts.

To sum up, academic American sociology has to date given us very little about Jews. But we do have instead something else, by no means just as good, but uniquely Jewish: we have the records of Jewish social work, and some hundreds of "surveys" that have been undertaken to further it. Social work in this country has developed along "religious" lines: we have Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish agencies. The Jewish agencies have collected enormous masses of material on Jewish families and their problems, Jewish orphans and children, the Jewish aged, and so on. This material has rarely been analyzed from the point of view of the light it may throw on Jewish history and sociology. It has only been nibbled at here and there: some day it will undoubtedly be subjected to organized and thorough investigation. Yet we cannot be too enthusiastic as to what this will reveal. We have often discovered that it is difficult to use data assembled for one purpose—in this case, the purpose of running a social agency—for another purpose; and that it is more economical to go out oneself and collect data *ad hoc.* Nevertheless, no other ethnic group in the country has such material, and perhaps the sociology of American Jews will eventually be richer because of it.

Supplementing the raw materials provided by social work are the "surveys" undertaken by various Jewish communities and by national organizations in order to help plan social services of communities. These surveys, while they often look like the community studies of American sociology, unfortunately very rarely are. They must perforce consume most of the energy and funds available in finding out the simple census data: how many Jews are in the community, what Jewish neighborhoods are growing and what declining, what are the numbers of children, adolescents, and age groups that have to be planned for, and so on. But they do go on to speak, to some extent, of Jewish education, of the interest in preserving traditional activities or adapting them to the American scene, and other matters of great interest.

It is these surveys, limited and defective as they are in many ways, that form the main basis for research and speculation about the American population (see Sophia Robison, "How Many Jews in America," COMMENTARY, August 1949), Jewish occupational distribution (see Samuel H. Flowerman, "Should Jews Change Their Occupation?" COMMENTARY, April 1947), and many other questions. This same poor hoard of information is worked over again and again, often yielding very little more than the average Jew could draw from his own experience, and often lacking whatever certainty and exactness would justify their unoriginality.

Most recently, we see the beginnings of a another kind of agency interest, and the possibility of another type of sociology. The defense agencies—the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Jewish Labor Committee—have to varying degrees abandoned their earlier interest in the "apologetic" sociology that they helped create, and have undertaken intensive studies of anti-Semitism and anti-Semites; secondarily, they have begun to study Jews, to see how they react to anti-Semitism and how their "morale" might be strengthened against anti-Semitism.

If these studies are pursued further, they may yet become the bulk of American Jewish sociology—certainly, at this time, studies of anti-Semitism, prejudice, and group relations sponsored by the defense agencies form the bulk of our research on these and similar subjects. Yet all this still remains only a possibility.

II

What can we say about American Jews on the basis of these studies? Everyone will find different facts salient and crucial: my own survey convinces me that there is enough evidence to make two large and important generalizations about the social characteristics of American Jews:

(1) They have advanced more rapidly, and are more prosperous, than any of the other ethnic groups that came to this country during more or less the same period, and are probably even more prosperous than most ethnic groups that arrived earlier. The number of workers among them tends rapidly to decline, the number of proprietors, white-collar workers, and professionals to rise. To this prime fact many other characteristics are related: their behavior and tastes, their crime rates, their educational characteristics, and so on.

(2) Despite their prosperity, Jews show very little tendency to assimilate: they intermarry less than any other ethnic group. They do *acculturate*—that is, they drop traditional habits and speech, and become culturally indistinguishable from other Americans; yet the line that divides them from the others remains sharper than that separating any other white group of immigrants.

The evidence for both these generalizations could be much ampler than it is, yet I think it is sufficient to make it very unlikely they will be overthrown by further research. I would like to present some of it, with particular emphasis on the techniques used, since so often we find that results have to be discarded because the techniques used cannot give us reliable and valid conclusions.

The most neatly constructed evidence for the first thesis is to be found in *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (W. L. Warner and Leo Srole, Yale, 1945), which was reviewed at length by Harold Orlansky in this department in January 1946. This was part of the Yankee City Series, an elaborate investigation of a New England town of less than 20,000 persons. It has proved more useful to us, I believe, than the studies of Jewish communities as such for one simple reason: in the Yankee City study *everyone* in the town came under the investigators' lenses. In most studies of only the Jews in a community, the investigators, trying to find all the Jews, may miss just those who, because they are not the type identified with the organized Jewish community, may radically affect the general results. More significantly, because only one segment of the general population is studied in the Jewish community studies, it is obviously much harder to make comparisons between Jews and the rest of the population: one usually has to use census figures for the whole population that do not refer to the same year as one's own study; one cannot, as already mentioned, distinguish Jews from non-Jews in the census figures; the categories of the census and one's own study are not equivalent; and so on.

Consequently, we arrive at the paradoxical fact that the study of *everybody* in a town gives us better information about Jews than the study of Jews alone.

In the Yankee City study, then, everyone in town was interviewed and rated on an occupational status index, constructed by giving different weights to different occupations. The Jews emerge with the highest occupational status in Yankee City (3.32), higher than the Irish (2.52), the Italians (2.28), or even the old-stock natives (2.56). One might argue, as Mr. Orlansky did, that it is unrealistic to give a weight of 6 to professions and 4 to management, and equally unrealistic to consider both the small shopkeeper and the entrepreneur "management." And adjustments along these lines would certainly lower the Jewish occupational status index. However, on other indices less subject to criticism—a residential status index and a social status index—Jews also come out remarkably well.

Similar testimony to the rapid economic advance and general prosperity of the Jews of small towns is to be found in practically every community study that has been made. The question arises whether the Jews of the large cities share in this social advance; if not, they would significantly modify this generalization, since the great bulk of American Jewry is in the large cities.

Now it is much harder to find out about the occupational distribution of Jews in large cities than of Jews in small towns; in the latter case one can hope that a survey of all in this way, a creation of the Chicago school, which seems peculiarly appropriate to the situation of the Jews. This is the concept of the "marginal man," the man who lives in two cultures—because he is a Eurasian, a half-caste, a mulatto, or a Jew. It was developed in a few essays by Robert E. Park (see the collection of his essays just published by the Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois: *Race and Culture*), it was spelled out further in a full-length book by Everett Stonequist (*The Marginal Man*, Scribner's, 1937), and it was applied by Mr. Stonequist directly to the situation of the Jews in an essay published in *Jews in a Gentile World* (Macmillan, 1942; edited by Isacque Graeber and Steuart Henderson Britt: this is as yet the best book on the sociology of the Jews published in America).

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NOW it is much harder to find out about the occupational distribution of Jews in large cities than of Jews in small towns; in the latter case one can hope that a survey of all known Jews and the estimate of local community leaders will not be far off. But estimates and surveys in big cities can be very far off.

Not having a census, we must resort to something like a census. And we have something very like a census of the Jews of New York City in the 1935 WPA study of the youth of New York. Everyone between sixteen and twenty-four in every hundredth residence was interviewed, and a great deal of information was established, not only about these young people but about their parents.

To go directly to the information that interests us: 34 per cent of the fathers of the Jewish youth were proprietors, managers, or officials, against 15 per cent of the fathers of the non-Jewish youth; 3 per cent of the Jewish fathers were unskilled workers, as against 19 per cent of the fathers of the non-Jewish youth.

These figures seem decisive. There still remains a large Jewish working class in New York: 45 per cent of the fathers of the Jewish youth are skilled and semi-skilled workers. But when we realize that this is New York, the center of the Jewish working class; that this is 1935, fifteen years ago, and that the number of Jewish workers has been declining steadily since then; and that, of this generation of fathers, at least 83 per cent—according to the same study—were born abroad, then we see that the Jewish working class in America, while it still remains sizable, is essentially a transitory phenomenon.

And what is replacing it? The figures on the occupations of the youth themselves are interesting. Jews make up 31 per cent of the youth of New York City; yet they form 56 per cent of all young people who are proprietors and managers, 43 per cent of all the young in clerical occupations, 37 per cent of all those in professions, 24 per cent of all those in skilled or semi-skilled occupations, 10 per cent of those in unskilled occupations. These are people between 16 and 24; as they grow older one can be reasonably sure the proportions of proprietors and professionals among them rises.

It would seem that while the middle-class characteristics of the Jews of a large city like New York are less marked than those of the Jews of small cities, they are there nevertheless. This conclusion is borne out by characteristics other than occupation: 8 per cent of the Jewish youth were married, as against 13 per cent of the non-Jewish; 3.6 per cent of the Jewish youth had children, as against 8 per cent of the non-Jewish youth; 12 per cent were on relief, as against 15 per cent of the non-Jewish youth. (Early marriage and a higher birth rate are, at any rate in this country, characteristics of the lower classes.)

And the pattern of their recreational activities is very interesting: "The principal recreational activities of Jewish and non-Jewish youth are the same, but more of the Jewish than of the non-Jewish had participated in them. Not only had more of the Jewish young men and women than of the others spent time listening to the radio, going to the movies, and visiting and entertaining friends; more of them had participated in athletic games, had gone swimming, played tennis or golf, attended concerts and lectures. More (though the differences were not so great) had hiked, gone to dances, and visited museums. Fewer however had spent any time on manual diversions, such as sewing or knitting, or doing carpentering, or putting a radio in condition, or repairing a motor."

These findings strike one as peculiarly significant: what we have here—in part—is a middle-class pattern of behavior as against a lower-class pattern (undoubtedly we also have some reflection of traditional Jewish cultural interests). Studies always show the middle class more active—no matter at what—than the lower class. Perhaps the balance would be righted if middle-class investigators added to the lower class's sum of recreational activities the amount of time spent in bars, on the numbers game, on sex, and various other activities that generally do not get into a study of "leisure-time activities" but which are nevertheless recreational.

This pattern might also explain something puzzling about Jews in America: even informed people find it hard to believe that the Jews make up only 3.5 per cent of the American population: one *sees* so many more! May not this be owing to the fact that their pursuit of middle-class activities and occupations makes Jews much more mobile and therefore more visible?

The middle class is of course more than a pattern of occupational distribution, or a matter of income: it is a whole culture, a complex of beliefs and behaviors. Dr. Kinsey pointed out that one could tell a middle-class person from his sexual history, and vice versa.

And those members of the lower class who are going to rise into the middle class can be distinguished very early by a certain pattern of activities: their sexual restraint, their interest in certain kinds of cultural and social activities, and so on. And consequently it seems reasonable that the study of even lower-class Jews would find a marked bias toward middle-class types of activities. This, at any rate, is one of the possible interpretations of a study of the Jewish neighborhoods of New York City by Julius B. Maller (*Jewish Social Service Quarterly,* 1934). Dr. Maller first determined what areas of New York were entirely Jewish or almost entirely Jewish: and he then tried to see what could be learned about those areas from the census, and the records of the Health Department, the Board of Education, and the police.

He resorted to the "Yom Kippur" method in order to find the all-Jewish neighborhoods: if almost all the school children of a neighborhood were absent on Yom Kippur, it was assumed it was Jewish. He fixed on fifteen health districts, with a total population of over 400,000, as solidly Jewish. (There are three hundred health districts in the city. He could not use larger districts—for example, school districts, of which there are forty-six—for in not one of them did Yom Kippur absences go over 90 per cent—though in 1916, seven of these forty-six did show more than 90 per cent absent on Yom Kippur. Clearly, the Jews had spread more widely over the city between 1916 and 1930.)

One cannot generalize, as Dr. Maller believed one could, about all the Jews of New York on the basis of these fifteen health districts; Jews who live in solidly Jewish neighborhoods must be different in many ways from those who do not. But we can find out what a "Jewish district" is like, sociologically speaking; and though a few districts of fairly high social status were included in the study, one could further generalize that, on the whole, these areas of greatest Jewish concentration included the poorer Jews and left out the richer Jews. If we compare our Jewish districts with the rest of the city, we find the following: the birth rate in the Jewish districts is somewhat smaller, the death rate is also smaller, and the median rental (giving one measure of economic status) is about the same. The homicide rate is half that for the city, and so is the death-from-accident rate; the suicide rate is also somewhat smaller, and indeed all death rates, except that for diabetes, are lower.

The school children are generally in better health. The average IQ of the school children in Jewish districts is 106, as against 100 for the city. The Jewish districts have many fewer retarded students, and a somewhat higher attendance rate. (Dr. Maller tells us that while 35 per cent of the elementary school children in all of New York are Jewish, this percentage rises to 53 for high schools.) The juvenile delinquency rate is less than half the city-wide average. Scientific caution demands that we again remind readers that these are the characteristics of *presumably* Jewish districts, in which five or ten per cent of the population may still be non-Jewish; and it is within the realm of possibility (though most unlikely) that these characteristics of the Jewish districts are in part attributable to the non-Jews living in them. Yet it seems most likely that these are indeed the characteristics particular to big-city Jews, who belong, for the most part, to the lower class and the lower middle class: and who, in their patterns of violence, of educational attendance, of disease, are more middle-class than the city as a whole.

THERE is one more study that would seem to highlight our main point most strikingly. Between 1921 and 1923, about 1500 California school-children, from grade three through high school, all with IQ's above 140, were selected for an extended study of the "gifted child." The third volume reporting on the fate of this group, *The Gifted Child Grows Up,* by Lewis M. Terman (the American father of the intelligence test) and Melita H. Oden, has recently been published by Stanford University Press.

Now it may be objected that we can learn nothing about Jews in general from such a study: this is a very special group, and has none of the qualities of "randomness" that a good sample should have. But where we have a group set up on the basis of a criterion having nothing to do with one's Jewishness—in this case, the IQ of children—then a comparison between the Jews and non-Jews drawn into such a net must be, it seems to me, as revealing as comparisons between Jews and non-Jews in general.

As might have been expected, Jews were represented in this group in numbers far in excess of their actual proportion of the population. Slightly more than 10 per cent of the entire group had two Jewish parents, and a special chapter is devoted to them, as "it would be interesting to know what differences exist, if any, between gifted subjects of various racial descent."*

We find that 57.5 per cent of the Jewish male children grew up to be "professionals" (Census Group I), and 44 per cent of the non-Jewish; roughly the same proportion of Jews and non-Jews are "semi-professional and higher business" (Census Group II): and only 15 per cent of the Jews are in "clerical, skilled trades, and retail business, farming . . . semi-skilled trades, minor clerical and minor business, slightly skilled trades and other occupations requiring little training or ability" (Census Groups III and below), compared with 31 per cent of the non-Jews. Physicians account for 26 per cent of Jewish professional men, and only 11 per cent of the non-Jewish; for lawyers the figures are 30 per cent Jewish and 29 per cent non-Jewish. On the other hand, only 9 per cent of the Jewish professionals teach in colleges, while 18 per cent of the non-Jewish do; 9 per cent of the Jews are in engineering, and 16 per cent of the non-Jews. Here we see, perhaps—besides the influence of discrimination—the occupational shift from the second to the third generations, when the sons of white collar workers and businessmen become professionals. The income of the Jewish men averaged nearly 25 per cent higher than that of the non-Jews in 1940, and in 1944, 42 per cent above the non-Jewish average.

While the Jews have achieved a considerably higher occupational status than the non-Jewish, their fathers' status was considerably *lower* than that of the non-Jewish fathers. Using the three classifications described above we find:

Census Group	*Jewish Fathers* (*Per Cent*)	*Non-Jewish Fathers* (*Per Cent*)
I (highest occupational status)	15	35
II (next highest occupational status)	56	30
III and below	29	35

In other words, starting from a position of lower status, as measured by the father's occupation, Jews realize, in higher proportion, positions of higher status.

This completes the presentation of evidence on the first generalization—that Jews are a middle-class group, increasingly to be found in business and the professions, and consequently more prosperous than non-Jews. The selection has been, inevitably, somewhat arbitrary: many other studies bearing on this point have not been referred to. I have given priority to studies previously not often cited, and to those that embody, to my mind, sounder techniques than the estimating and partial interviewing that is so common in the field of Jewish sociological research.

On the second major thesis suggested—that of Jewish assimilation—there is much less evidence to present, but it is as decisive as the evidence on occupation and class. The term "assimilation" is of course one of those weasel words: Zionists denounce non-Zionists as assimilationists, and sometimes non-Zionists even denounce Zionists as assimilationists, and Yiddish journalists often act as if everyone who did not speak Yiddish was an assimilationist. Julius Drachsler, in his book *Democracy and Assimilation* (Macmillan, 1920), gave the least debatable criterion: assimilation should be measured by intermarriage. All degrees of assimilation less than that are matters of party polemics or individual judgment. When Jews marry non-Jews in large numbers, however, there is no question as to whether they are assimilating: except for physical extermination —which is certainly not assimilation—it is the only way in which large bodies of Jews seem to disappear.

Since no summary statistics on marriages will give us what we are interested in, investigators of this question have gone directly to raw data—the marriage licenses in city records—and worked from those.

Julius Drachsler studied 20,000 marriage licenses for each of the years 1908 to 1912 in Manhattan and the Bronx. In all, he examined 100,000 of the 170,000 marriage licenses issued in that period. C. E. Sillcox and G. M. Fisher (*Catholics, Jews, and Protestants,* Harper, 1934) give a good critical summary of his work, and even though it is likely that his estimates for Jews are too low, they do not believe he can be far off. It turns out that Jews have a lower rate of intermarriage than any other group except Negroes. The intermarriage rate for Jews was 1.17 per hundred of all Jews marrying; for Negroes 1.08; while for Italians the intermarriage rate was 6.76; for Poles 20; for Irishmen 22; and it continues to rise for Scandinavians, Germans, and Englishmen to figures in the sixties.

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*The carefree use of the term "race," and the date when this study began, should be enough to reveal to the informed reader that very little that we might consider "psychological" will be found here. The chief psychological concept of the study is that of the "wholesome": and the point of the undertaking is to show that children with high IQ's are as "wholesome" as any others, and do not come to a bad end more frequently; which is satisfactorily demonstrated. Even when subjects turn out unwholesomely, the authors look eagerly for redeeming features: M122 "took to gambling, neglected his studies, and was disqualified. . . . He began forging checks to cover gambling debts . . . and was sentenced to prison. . . . He became an exemplary prisoner and was soon the editor of the institutional publication."

Dr. Drachsler also compared rates for the first generation (persons who had themselves immigrated) with rates for the second generation (their children) and here the picture becomes less sharp. The rate of intermarriage for immigrant Jews is .64; for their children, it is 4.51. The rise is greatest among those groups that had originally intermarried least. Thus, immigrants from Russia had an intermarriage rate of .36; their children have one ten times greater, 3.40. On the other hand, the intermarriage rate for immigrant German Jews, which stands at 3.70, was less than doubled in the second generation, 6.02.

These figures for the second generation, and particularly for the Jews of Central and Western Europe are high, but they are nowhere near the intermarriage rates that aroused the apprehension of Ruppin. After 1910, his statistics show (see *The Jewish Fate and Future,* London, Macmillan, 1940), Jewish intermarriage in Central Europe rarely went below a rate of 10 for 100; in Germany in 1928 it was 21; and in some cities (Hamburg, 1932; Copenhagen, 1900-1905) it rose to over 30.

The question now becomes what happens in the second and third and later generations of Jews in America? Does the rate of intermarriage rise, or is it checked? Dr. Drachsler had only a small number of cases of third-generation Jews; and they seemed to be intermarrying at a rate slightly less than the second generation. It would have been most valuable to have had a follow-up of Dr. Drachsler's study; unfortunately, there was none.

We do, however, have a study of intermarriage in New Haven that I believe is of very great significance and that does throw light on our question.* Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy ("Single or Triple Melting Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven," *American Journal of Sociology,* Volume 49, 1944) did not differentiate between generations. However, she tried to get the long-range historical trend by studying marriage records for 1870, 1900, 1930, and 1940—and unquestionably there were higher proportions of second- and third-generation Jews at the later dates. For each succeeding year we find, for each group, a rise in the proportion of those intermarrying. In 1940, 6 per cent of the Jews, 18 per cent of the Italians, 45 per cent of the British Americans, 47 per cent of the Poles, 55 per cent of the Irish, 73 per cent of the Germans, and 82 per cent of the Scandinavians intermarried: "The Jews are the most endogamous of all groups except Negroes."

However, she also discovered a pattern that had not been mentioned before. There seemed to be certain limits beyond which ethnic intermarriage did not go, and this limit was defined by religion. Protestants tended to marry Protestants, and Catholics tended to marry Catholics. And so while in the case of Protestants and Catholics a real ethnic melting pot was in operation, with the lines between groups of different national origin being erased, in the case of Jews, this was not so, for here religion and national origin coincided.

Dr. Kennedy has a most interesting series of tables showing intermarriage between religions, not nationalities. Here the steady breakdown of endogamy is not so marked: in 1940, we find, 78 per cent of all Protestants are still marrying Protestants (the same figure as in 1930), 84 per cent of all Catholics are marrying Catholics (a rise from 82 per cent in 1930), and 94 per cent of all Jews in New Haven are marrying Jews, as compared with 97 per cent in 1930. Only among Jews did the percentage of religious intermarriage rise from 1930 to 1940. Dr. Kennedy believes that

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*Bessie Bloom Wessel's study of Woonsocket (*An Ethnic Survey of Woonsocket, Rhode Island,* University of Chicago Press, 1931) does not give any information on the second and third generations—the Jewish settlement there is too young—but does corroborate Drachsler's findings. The Jewish rate for the first generation is 1.8, compared with an Italian rate of 7.1, and an Irish of 21.8. Milton Barron's *People Who Intermarry* (Syracuse, 1946) covers a small town in Connecticut, with too few cases to permit generalizations.

what she calls the pattern of the "triple melting pot"—the tendency to marry within one's religious group, if not within one's ethnic group—is already set, and the walls between the three groups will probably not crumble further. One cannot know whether she is right: it would be most valuable to follow up this very interesting study for 1950, to see to what extent her prediction holds.

What can we conclude about intermarriage? Dr. Drachsler suggests an intermarriage rate for the second and third generation of Jews in this country of 4 or 5 per cent—this was before the First World War; Dr. Kennedy's figures show for the entire Jewish community of New Haven in 1946 a figure of 6 per cent. Have we anything more definite to go on? It has been suggested by a number of demographers that much could be learned about American Jews from the Canadian census: there "religion" is requested, and since the Jewish community is of the same national origins as that in the United States, and lives in a similar social environment, we might assume that what is true for Canada is true for the United States—at any rate, for the smaller American Jewish communities. A number of other qualifications would have to be made, however, of which the most important is that the Canadian Jewish community probably represents conditions as they prevailed in the United States ten or twenty years ago.

At any rate, the Canadian official figures show, for the years from 1926 to 1936, an over-all rate of intermarriage of about 2.6 per cent. The figures for Quebec, with its strong Roman Catholic environment, may be considered somewhat special, and Sillcox and Fisher give figures for the rest of Canada without Quebec: there it is 3.37 per cent (for 1926-1931). There is no historical trend to be discerned in these figures, which is quite remarkable, since all the figures we have for the assimilating Jewish communities of Central Europe show a steadily increasing rate of intermarriage with the passage of time, and indeed, this was true of the East European Jewish communities, too.

One might add other bits of evidence from here and there, none quite as good as that presented; the over-all conclusion seems to be that no one has as yet demonstrated a tendency toward Jewish intermarriage in America or Canada above 5 per cent.

It may be objected that the data are not sufficiently reliable or recent. Yet the finding of a general American pattern of the "triple melting pot" suggests that intermarriage has reached or will soon reach a natural limit. Indeed, the problem of the American Jewish community is not, as many people are becoming aware, a problem of assimilation, whether in the form of intermarriage, baptism, or a simple loss of identification with the community. All these trends operate, but they are not increasing in importance with the passage of time: we have reason to believe they have probably reached their limits, and may have been reversed.

Here we have a paradox. The Jewish community, which once maintained a high resistance against the outer world by means of a marked difference in religion and customs, has abandoned those differences. What more natural than that, with the containing pressure reduced, the content of the Jewish vessel should pour out? And in the 1920's it certainly seemed that was happening. Yet something happened to restore the pressure: perhaps it was the hostility of the non-Jewish world. At any rate, it was restored, the community finds itself again within the old walls, but the world within the walls has changed drastically, and can hardly be distinguished, by the way it looks, from the world outside. And the rise of such slogans as the demand for "positive Judaism" and "Jewish content," replacing the old simple fear of assimilation, indicates clearly enough that people have felt the difference. A social group, with clearly marked boundaries, exists, but the source of the energies that hold this group separate and of the ties that bind it together has become completely mysterious.

The answer to these questions will not be given by the general over-all type of study we have here examined, or by a study of the social characteristics of the group as seen in statistics. We would have to go into such questions as the differences between large and small communities, the history of the social and economic relations of Jews and non-Jews, the history of Jewish communities, the characteristics of Jewish organizations, of the Jewish family, of Jewish social psychology. And for this we would have to turn, in a subsequent article, to the products of what I have called an "intimate" sociology, the study of Jewish communities, social life, and Jewish psychology.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Mr. Hook and Academic Freedom

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Sidney Hook's renewed attack upon Mrs. Helen Lynd's integrity [letter to the editor published in December Commentary] is helpful neither to Mr. Hook's exposition of his own views with regard to communism, nor to the understanding of Mrs. Lynd's analysis of the University of Washington case. It seems to me dangerous to the cause of freedom among academic people that Mr. Hook should lend the weight of his intellectual position in the academic world to the view that all those intellectuals who disagree with him on the question of what to do about the Communist party are either academic fellow-travelers or confused liberals.

Mr. Hook would now simply disqualify Mrs. Lynd from further scholarly work on political or social questions because, according to Mr. Hook's files, Mrs. Lynd's name has appeared on petitions which Mr. Hook would not sign, and which were sponsored by Communist-front organizations. I do not know the organizations in question, except for the Waldorf Conference, which Mrs. Lynd, along with others, sponsored because in its initial stages there was some chance that the aims of peace might be discussed by serious intellectuals. But I do know Mrs. Lynd quite well, and I believe that if she signed petitions in which the Communist party had an interest, she signed because of a conviction that in doing so, some good might come to the cause of social and personal freedom. Mr. Hook may think Mrs. Lynd to have been mistaken, but she is neither dishonest, lacking in integrity, nor politically committed to the line of any party. Mrs. Lynd's public record for sociological, historical, and philosophical research is of such quality of objectivity as to withstand any attack of the sort Mr. Hook has made.

Mr. Hook tells us that his "statistical studies show that members of the professoriat constitute the strongest and most influential group of fellow-travelers in the United States." There were in all the institutions of higher education in the United States, as of the academic year 1947-48, 233,660 faculty members (Federal Security Agency circular no. 263, November 1949). 110 of these people sponsored the Waldorf Conference. Some of these 110 had never had any former connection with similar organizations. Something less than one hundred men and women compose the number of Mr. Hook's "fellow-travelers" at their strongest and most influential point. The other 233,560 comprise an academic community which, as far as I have seen, is politically conservative to the point of inertia, and whose strongest political component is that connected with the New Deal policies. I suggest that the political and social influence of any one of Mr. Hook's one hundred outcasts is directly proportional to the honesty, accuracy, and independence of judgment displayed by them in the statements they make in public and in their academic communities on political and social matters. One can only hope that the rest of us will manage to keep our heads in the torrent of rhetoric and false argument which Mr. Hook feels is likely to come from this group.

Consider the case of Mr. Harlow Shapley. Mr. Shapley's sponsorship of the Waldorf Conference and his sentiment towards the delegates who attended and spoke was a matter for which he took his own responsibility and paid his own price in the judgment of his colleagues. For his academic future, Mr. Shapley relied upon the protection of his university. I imagine that Mr. Conant wishes that Mr. Shapley would do more astronomy and less politics, but this has not led him to attack Mr. Shapley but rather to defend him against the ill will of the general public. It is ironic to find Mr. Hook so much farther to the Right than Harvard University, and I must say that in the interests of academic freedom, I am happy that Mr. Conant, rather than Mr. Hook, is president of Harvard.

What bothers me in Mr. Hook's argument is the implication that there should be no room for disagreement in interpreting the data of contemporary politics and the further implication that only by anti-Communist polemic can we keep political thought and action moving in a liberal direction. The country's life today is already saturated with anti-Communist feeling to a degree which makes it difficult for any honest and serious thinker to speak plainly about his views of current events, should his views differ from popular opinion. Mrs. Lynd and Mr. Meiklejohn have done their best to speak plainly at a time when national feeling is running against their views.

It seems to me to be an over-simplified conception of the role of the intellectual to insist that he must take, as his major premise and major task, the denunciation of Communist programs, policies, and acts. This is useful work for those who have polemical talent and a polemical style of thinking and writing, provided that it does not distort the issues in the heat of the attack. But it is unwise to make the determining factors in judgments concerning political events and political opinions the extent to which a given judgment is favorable or unfavorable to the Soviet Union and the Communist party. This puts a great restriction upon objectivity of statement and introduces a sour and angry way of handling the discussion of the most important issues we now face. For the sake of our own national and international security, we have a continuous need to maintain the atmosphere of free enquiry for the work of social criticism by all our intellectuals. There is a continuing need to develop further a social philosophy and program which can meet those weaknesses in our system to which the Communists continually draw attention. Mr. Hook's present method of meeting these needs has been one of accusation and polemic against honest colleagues. I believe it does injury to the cause of academic freedom.

Harold Taylor

Sarah Lawrence College
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Mr. Hook Replies

To the Editor of Commentary:

"Fantastic" is the word for Mr. Taylor's reading of my article and rejoinder in the October and December issues of Commentary. He writes as if I had proposed a purge of fellow-travelers. The truth is that I was arguing *against* a purge. He taxes me with wishing to disqualify fellow-travelers from academic work. The truth is that I called for criticism of their behavior and pronouncements *within* the academic community. He asserts that my criticism flows merely from the fact that fellow-travelers differ with me on social and political questions. The truth is that I defended their right to disagree with anyone and everyone and criticized not their right to disagree but the double standard they followed in their agreements and disagreements. The main point with respect to Mrs. Lynd is whether it is admissible to rely on private evidence in making public charges against non-Communists if it is inadmissible to do so in making charges against Communists.

Not a single view Mr. Taylor attributes to me comes within hailing distance of my clearly expressed meaning. What, for example, could be more explicit than my statement: "On any view of academic freedom these men and women [the fellow-travelers] have every right to be members of the academic community"? On this and on other matters referred to by Mr. Taylor I trust Commentary readers will take the trouble of referring to the actual text of my writings.

In "the interests of academic freedom," Mr. Taylor is happy that not I but Mr. Conant is president of Harvard. One would imagine that I had proposed that Mr. Shapley be dismissed or administratively disciplined. Mr. Taylor should know that this is false. He also should know that Mr. Conant's position on the question of members of the Communist party teaching in our schools, as evidenced by his signature to the Resolution of the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, is, if anything, more stern than mine. Whatever its wisdom, I do not contest Mr. Shapley's right to take any position in any company; I insist, however, upon my right to criticize his publicly expressed views.

Mr. Taylor has committed a logical blunder in confusing the proposition that the largest and most influential group of fellow-travelers are members of the academic community with the proposition that the largest and most influential group of members of the academic community are fellow-travelers. His citation of the total number of persons in the profession has absolutely no bearing on the truth of the first proposition, which is the one I asserted. The ratio of fellow-traveling teachers to fellow-travelers is derived by putting in the denominator the number of fellow-travelers, not the total number of teachers.

The rules of logic are no different for progressive educators than for conventional ones. Yet Mr. Taylor can bring himself to write "the implication [*sic*] in Mr. Hook's argument is that there should be no room for disagreement in interpreting the data of contemporary politics." Note that he carefully avoids stating what the argument is from which this alleged "implication" follows. Had he put my argument down in black and white, the absurdity of attributing this "implication" to me would have been too obvious for him to risk palming it off. It is such a silly *non sequitur* from anything I have ever written, that it betokens not so much a wildly mistaken inference as a move in the strategy of disingenuous polemic.

My position with respect to criticism of fellow-travelers of Communist-front organizations is no different from my position towards the fellow-travelers of fascism, racism, or clerical authoritarianism, irrespective of their number. And despite another of Mr. Taylor's inventions, it does *not* imply "that only by anti-Communist polemic can we keep political thought and action moving in a liberal direction," nor, I should add, only by anti-fascist polemic.

Against all the fellow-travelers of totalitarianism I made, and here repeat, the charge of lack of academic integrity which I defined as follows:

"What crucially defines the treason to *academic* integrity . . . is their defense of, or silent acquiescence in, the use of police methods against their colleagues abroad—and what police methods!—to suppress ideas in any field not countenanced by party dogma, and their direct and indirect support in this country of a movement which wherever it comes to power aims to destroy every vestige of academic freedom. These 'defenders' of academic freedom are its gravediggers" (COMMENTARY, October 1949, italics in the original).

Principled opponents of all varieties of totalitarianism need no reminders from Mr. Taylor that there is a continuing need to extend and deepen the processes of democracy in American life. They have been acting on this truth for many years, and long before Mr. Taylor appeared on the scene. I find it extremely odd, however, that Mr. Taylor never issues these reminders when we criticize Franco or Peron or the fellow-travelers of clerical reaction at home and abroad.

SIDNEY HOOK

New York City

Richmond's Rabbi Calisch

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Slow Revolution in Richmond, Va." [COMMENTARY, December 1949], David and Adele Bernstein have presented a realistic picture of their subject. I feel compelled, however, to add a word of comment to the account.

The writers quote a Beth Ahabah member as recalling, "Somehow I don't think Calisch was loved by the Jews here, or even greatly respected during the last years of his life." From my experience as assistant to Dr. Calisch during the last year of his rabbinate, I cannot imagine that such an attitude even on the part of a few who shared it could be taken seriously. True, there were those who did not love Dr. Calisch; but within the membership of Beth Ahabah Dr. Calisch was deservedly and sincerely respected for his intellect and integrity even if there were those who questioned the direction of his philosophy of Jewish life. By all except those to whom Dr. Calisch represented a serious spiritual or social challenge he was respected.

SIDNEY H. BROOKS

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Paul Blanshard on the Catholics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Many readers who thought they appreciated the political, social, and religious ideals for which COMMENTARY seemed to stand, have been very much perplexed by Will Herberg's extremely critical review (COMMENTARY, August 1949) of Paul Blanshard's book *American Freedom and Catholic Power*.

In the fight of your magazine for vigorous group development, inter-group tolerance, and against exploitation and tyranny over the mind and soul of man, we regarded Blanshard as an ally. Your review, which accuses Blanshard of "bias and distortion," "calculated special pleading," "arguing for effect rather than for the balanced truth," "vulgar anti-Catholicism," etc., has caused a good deal of uneasiness. It is difficult to discover out of what thin air Herberg's reproaches could have been manufactured. Blanshard's book has struck many intelligent readers as a rather restrained and factual description of those activities of the Catholic Church which are related to power, freedom, and life in general on the 20th-century American scene. In complaining of Blanshard's "sneering," Herberg seems to have absorbed the Catholic view that finds all criticism of the Church an expression of bias.

Herberg claims that Blanshard distorts Catholic beliefs about the salvation of non-Catholics. As I am sure Herberg knows, this is so complicated a doctrine that it has recently led to a curious controversy between the Catholic hierarchy and Catholic teachers at Boston College. It is, moreover, a doctrine on which the Catholic Church has taken very ambiguous positions, and which American cardinals would interpret much more delicately than, for example, their colleagues in Spain. One thing, however, is certain: at no time and at no place has the Catholic Church held views as broad-minded as those of most non-Catholic Americans and of the Jewish religion—that Jewish view so well expressed in the quotations from Leo Baeck's book *The Essence of Judaism* cited in the review which immediately follows that of the Blanshard book: "salvation is destined for the whole world" and "a heathen who does right is worth as much as a High Priest in Israel." Whether the Catholic view, however leniently it may be interpreted, or the Jewish one as expressed by Rabbi Baeck, is in closer agreement with the ideals of American freedom—and I trust of Commentary and Mr. Herberg—need hardly be discussed here.

Herberg goes on to criticize Blanshard's remarks on "the Vatican's rapprochement with the fascist regimes of Italy and Spain" and accuses Blanshard of omitting to mention "the same Vatican's impressive efforts on behalf of the Jews." Blanshard does, however, mention these efforts—for instance, on page 245—while Herberg, on the other hand, forgets in this connection that the Vatican concluded a concordat with Hitler in the summer of 1933, after Hitler's anti-Semitism had already moved from the sphere of oratory and books to definite action (e.g., in the "Boycott Day" of April 1, 1933). And it cannot be repeated often enough that, while the Vatican has been quick to excommunicate Communists, one has yet to learn of the excommunication of a prominent anti-Semite or fascist.

However, Blanshard's supposed errors of fact do not represent in Herberg's eyes his gravest fault. Blanshard's main disqualifications lie in his "secularist-statist philosophy that . . . is far more dangerous than anything in American Catholicism to which the book calls attention," his "naive faith in . . . the deliverances of science," his "secularism, linked to exaltation of the 'social-welfare state' as an omnicompetent agency for the total control of social life," his "perfervid nationalism and statism."

Now Blanshard's book is neither about his own religion nor about Catholic theology and its relation to American ideals or political tradition. It deals, rather, with concrete, everyday political and social activities touching the life of everyone in this country. The book could be the product of a deeply religious person or of an agnostic positivist, of a Jew or of a Protestant, and Blanshard's political philosophy might be a social-minded conservatism, liberalism, or socialism. Blanshard's implied presuppositions, his "strange faith," seem to me, for example, quite close to good Judaism—but this is a matter of subjective evaluation.

It is peculiar, also, that "welfare state" has become a pejorative term. Our country is indeed—and always has been—a "secular state," but that does not mean, as Catholics would like to convince us, an immoral or amoral state. Your reviewer seems to think that *any* interference of the state with the "higher law" of religion is "statism" and against "the best of democratic tradition." In fact, the state has always placed limits on religious practice and religious power—as in the prohibition of polygamy. Blanshard does not propose a state "monopoly of social and cultural life"; he fights only against a clerical power that interferes with the legitimate freedom and interest of every non-Catholic, censors our libraries and radio, distorts our films, prevents reasonable divorce and birth-control legislation, and finally tears apart our school system, the greatest unifying institution of our country.

The fact that a group is a minority or that it speaks in the name of religion does not in itself make all its policies conform to the ideals of American life. The control of variant intolerant opinions and powers is a duty which even the most democratic state cannot escape, and an attack on the Vatican is not, as Catholics claim, an attack on all religion and a sign of secularism. It is an utter distortion of Blanshard's book to accuse him of lack of understanding for a viewpoint which bases morality on religious faith.

Herberg not only goes far out of his way to appease Catholic sensibilities, but even seems to affirm the Catholic criticism of our "allegedly 'neutral' school system that in fact indoctrinates the child and young person with an outlook on life in which . . . God is treated as an outmoded irrelevance." What a biased, erroneous picture of our hundred-year-old school system, which with all its faults is among the finest fruits of American democracy!

In reading Herberg's diatribe against Blanshard's presumed infidelity, the reader may easily forget what the book under discussion is really about. Let me quote from Blanshard's book (page 259) what Karl Barth—one of Europe's leading Protestant theologians, and, I am sure, well known to Mr. Herberg—said as recently as 1948: "To be honest I see some connection between [Roman Catholicism and communism]. Both are totalitarian; both claim man as a whole." Or let us consider a statement of former President Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico, a man who had considerable experience of Catholic power: "The Catholic Church has always undermined any liberty of conscience" (quoted by Blanshard, page 284). Will Herberg has not shown us that these two statements, which are central to Blanshard's book, are untrue.

Mr. Herberg's review is in complete contradiction to the spirit of your magazine. Are you serious when you publish articles in favor of religious freedom or on liberal democracy, when at the same time you attack those who fight totalitarian pretensions?

(Since the writer feels it possible that the above remarks may be misunderstood, and that his children's and his own friendly relations with his Catholic neighbors might thus be interfered with, he would like to remain anonymous.)

A Constant Reader

Mr. Herberg Replies

To the Editor of Commentary:

There is no better way of answering the charges of your anonymous correspondent than by asking your readers to check my review against Mr. Blanshard's book and judge for themselves. I would be perfectly willing to let it go at that. Perhaps, however, a few comments may not be altogether out of place:

1. Mr. Blanshard's book does display vulgar anti-Catholicism on almost every page. What but vulgar anti-Catholicism is it to ridicule the names of Catholic religious institutions, to sneer at "the whole segregated system of nuns, wimples and convents" as "medieval posturing and useless mortifications," or to interpret Catholic objections to intermarriage with Jews as anti-Semitism? How, I wonder, would your correspondent have felt had Mr. Blanshard cast such gibes at the "medieval" *yeshivot* right in our own up-to-date New York City, at Jews praying ("posturing") in *tallit* and *tefillim,* at the "useless" prescriptions of *kashrut,* or at Jewish objections to intermarriage with Catholics? To me bigotry is bigotry whether directed against Catholics or Jews.

2. Neither on page 245 nor anywhere else in Mr. Blanshard's book do I find reference to what I, in my review, called "the Vatican's impressive efforts on behalf of the Jews during the Hitler terror." If your correspondent would like to know something about these efforts, let him read the article "Father Benoit: 'Ambassador of the Jews,'" in Commentary for December 1946.

3. The Catholic doctrine of salvation may or may not be as liberal as Rabbi Baeck's, but it is emphatically not what Mr. Blanshard in his book suggests it is. Nor is it particularly "complicated." Even if it were "complicated," it would have been Mr. Blanshard's obvious duty to find his way through the complications before using it in his indictment of the Church. He need not have gone to recondite treatises of theology or canon law. He could, for example, have consulted such popular but fully authoritative handbooks as *The Faith of Millions,* by the Rev. John A. O'Brien, which has sold into the hundreds of thousands, and he would have found (pages 55-56) that only those are condemned "who are convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church but for some selfish reason fail to profess their faith in her."

4. But even if Catholic doctrine did indeed, as Blanshard falsely charges, limit salvation to good-standing members of the Church, what then? How would that conflict with American democracy? Does American democracy possess its own doctrine of salvation which serves as a criterion by which other faiths are to be judged as democratic and undemocratic? Something of the kind seems to be implied in your correspondent's argument and, I am afraid, in Mr. Blanshard's argument as well. But this is precisely what I meant when I charged in my review that Mr. Blanshard's criticism of Catholic doctrine and practice was conducted basically in terms of a secular religion of his own, which he unwarrantably identified with American democracy. Mr. Blanshard's crude secularist bias is notorious and has embarrassed even those who otherwise regard his book very highly. Thus Henry Smith Leiper, the distinguished American Protestant leader, writing in the *Ecumenical Review* (Winter 1949), admits that "the reading of this book will raise the question in many minds whether the author does not tend to overlook the dangers of secular nationalism, which are quite as real as the dangers of ecclesiastical authoritarianism. . . ." Henry Sloane Coffin, former president of Union Theological Seminary, the great Protestant institution, speaks even more plainly: "Mr. Blanshard gives the appearance of an undiluted secularist, with a naive faith in the moral impeccability of the 'social-welfare state'" (*Christianity and Crisis,* May 2, 1949). The fact that your correspondent finds Mr. Blanshard's secularism to be "quite close to good Judaism" casts a rather significant light on what Judaism has come to mean in certain circles.

5. I am sorry, I cannot work up any religious fervor about the public school. It has served our people well in many respects and is an important acquisition of democracy. But one must be blind or indifferent not to see (to repeat the passage in my review) that this "allegedly 'neutral' school system . . . in fact indoctrinates the child and young person with an outlook on life in which man is held to be sufficient unto himself and God is treated as an outmoded irrelevance." This does not seem to bother Mr. Blanshard or your correspondent very much, but it bothers me a great deal and I think should bother every believing Jew.

But in a way, this is all beside the point. However great may be the merits of the public school system, American democracy does not grant it a monopoly of education. On the contrary, American democracy recognizes the right of parents to send their children to private or parochial schools or even to educate them at home, provided the level of teaching meets certain standards. To deny this right would be totalitarian statism and would justify defiance in the name of the "higher law." When Catholics say this, they are right, and when Blanshard attacks them for saying it, he simply reveals the totalitarian and statist strain in his own thinking. So does your correspondent.

6. Karl Barth is a great theologian and I owe him an immense debt in my own religious thinking. But I do not believe that even his greatest admirers would regard him as particularly distinguished for his understanding of the political realities of contemporary Europe. Yet I would not disagree with him when he points to the totalistic elements in the pretensions of the Catholic Church. Nor did I fail to make this clear in my review, where I wrote: "Catholic power . . . raises a difficulty because the political and social aims pursued by the Catholic Church in some ways run counter to what most Americans have held to be the very foundation of their democratic way of life. . . . Equally disturbing is the Church's tendency to confuse, or rather equate, the spiritual interests of Christianity with the political and social, even economic interests of the Vatican, the hierarchy, and the Church establishment."

7. Particularly offensive do I find your anonymous correspondent's charge that I have "gone far out of [my] way to appease Catholic sensibilities. . . ." If this means anything at all, it means that I have compromised my convictions in order to please the Catholic Church. Such allegations, it seems to me, come with particular ill grace from one who does not have the courage to sign his own letter of denunciation. Your correspondent evidently has no objections to "appeasing" his "Catholic neighbors" on his own account by hiding his views of their Church from them; apparently, that is merely "maintaining friendly relations." But when I write a review which does not please him, he is quick to question my integrity.

Will Herberg

New York City

Another View

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a Protestant Christian who has often had occasion to appreciate Commentary, may I give a special word of thanks for Will Herberg's review of Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power.* So acute and fair a review made me somewhat ashamed of most of the Protestant statements I have seen about the book. Too many people have welcomed Blanshard's work without thinking through its implications, as a politician might rush to shake the hand of anyone voting his ticket, for whatever reason.

Some of the political objectives of Rome are disturbing to believers in democracy. Blanshard has presented some of the well known facts and has dug out many less known ones; it is right that we should be made aware of these facts, and for such a service we may thank Blanshard. But Herberg is right in pointing out so clearly how Blanshard's facts are mingled with a set of interpretations which are quite dubious. Indeed, if respect for rights of conscience and appreciation for a diversity of religious viewpoints are part of democracy, Blanshard has assumptions as undemocratic as those he attacks. We may be wary of doctrinaire claims to possess the truth, whether they come from ecclesiastics or secularists.

Roger L. Shinn

Heidelberg College
Tiffin, Ohio

Our Suffering Readers

To the Editor of Commentary:

That story by Sholom Aleichem is supposed to be for children? And that translation is supposed to be into English? Oh, woe is me! Khe-he-he!

Herbert Abel

New York City

A Correction

To the Editor of Commentary:

Belatedly I noticed that there is a misprint in my poem, "Scene With Figure," which appears in your January issue. The line you print as "Destroyed shriveled joy's long raveled threads" should read: "Destroying shriveled joy's long raveled threads."

As you have it, both grammar and cadence are "destroyed." If there is any way of calling the attention of your readers to the fact that I am not guilty of this awkwardness, I should be obliged.

Babette Deutsch

New York City

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Appeal of Communism

The God that Failed. Edited by Richard Crossman. Harper. 273 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by Granville Hicks

Mr. Crossman, an editor of the *New Statesman and Nation* and a Labor MP, explains in his introduction that this symposium developed out of an argument with Arthur Koestler. "When all is said," Koestler declared, "we ex-Communists are the only people on your side who know what it's all about." He went on to describe his own state of mind when he joined the Communist party, and Crossman said, "This should be a book." "Our concern," Crossman writes, "was to study the state of mind of the Communist convert, and the atmosphere of the period—from 1917 to 1939—when conversion was so common. For this purpose it was essential that each contributor should be able not to relive the past—that is impossible—but, by an act of imaginative self-analysis, to recreate it, despite the foreknowledge of the present."

The contributors were wisely chosen, and the result is a book remarkably unified for a symposium, and one of the best studies of communism ever to have appeared. Koestler wrote the longest piece, and is properly given the center of the stage. Gide's contribution was put together by Enid Starkie out of various writings of his on communism and Russia. Richard Wright's chapter originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1944. Ignazio Silone, Louis Fischer, and Stephen Spender seem to have written their essays specially for this volume.

However the pieces came into existence, they fit together beautifully. As the arrangement of the book indicates, we have three party members—"The Initiates"—and three fellow-travelers—"Worshipers from Afar." (Spender was actually a member of the party for a few weeks in 1937-8, but was never what Crossman calls an "initiate.") The contributions cover virtually the entire period from the Russian Revolution to the Soviet-Nazi pact: Silone was one of the founders of the Italian Communist party, and Fischer went to the Soviet Union as a journalist in 1922; Gide and Koestler were pioneers of the leftward movement of the intelligentsia in the 30's; Wright and Spender, in their different ways, were representative figures of that movement. Furthermore, the six men illustrate three important types of Communist convert: Silone and Wright were actually identified with victims of exploitation, the former with the peasants of Central Italy, the latter with the Negroes of the United States; Fischer and Koestler were detached intellectuals, not doing badly themselves but well aware of the insecurity of their class in society; Gide and Spender belonged to privileged groups, and were moved almost exclusively, as the others were moved partly, by pity and a sense of guilt.

Koestler's and Silone's essays are quite different, but both are magnificent. Koestler's is a brilliant, bitterly humorous account of the experiences of an intellectual in the Communist party of Germany, page after page of which would serve as a description of the American party. Silone's is less informative, but deeper and more significant. Son of a *déclassé* Hungarian Jew, Koestler belonged to no one, but Silone, as all his novels have shown, belonged body and soul to the Italian peasants among whom he grew up. Their suffering was his suffering, and his passion for social justice was the expression of hopes they scarcely dared to voice. Koestler's disillusionment with communism wrecked an elaborate structure of ideas in which he had placed great confidence, but to Silone disillusionment brought pain in every fiber of his being.

None of the others was involved so deeply. Gide had a romantic love affair with a Russia conjured up out of his imagination and his generosity of spirit, and it is no wonder that he was disillusioned by his glimpse of Soviet reality. Fischer, on the other hand, carried on a prolonged flirtation, frequently shocked by his mistress's falseness but for many years able to convince himself that, like Lady Kitty in Somerset Maugham's *The Circle,* she was faithful in spirit. Spender, too, in a rather gossipy but candid essay, speaks at length of doubts and the various ways in which they were disposed of.

Like Silone, and therefore unlike the other contributors, Richard Wright met communism on the level of everyday experience, not in the upper strata of international politics and ideological debate. And, whereas Silone was soon transposed to the upper levels and was disillusioned by what he saw and heard in the high councils of the Communist International, Wright fought his fight out on the level on which it began. It was the behavior of rank-and-file members and minor functionaries that shaped his disillusionment, and the conflict came about simply because he found that he could not be a party member and a writer—the kind of writer he wanted to be. It was a conflict that he could not understand at the time, so that he left the party with regret, saying to himself, "I'll be for them, even though they are not for me." And for some years thereafter he did work with the party, until he learned that what had seemed merely arbitrary and narrow actually expressed the boundless hatred of the free mind that permeates communism.

ALL the essays, as Crossman points out, show that communism has constantly warred upon the intellectuals, and yet they illustrate the extraordinary intellectual influence that it has had in Western Europe and the United States from the October Revolution to the present day. By no means negligible in the 20's, communism became an intellectual force—and a fad—in the 30's. No longer a fad, it remained a force in the 40's, and neither heresy-hunts nor such reasoned analyses as appear in this volume seem likely to exorcise its influence in the 50's. The Communists have included among their sympathizers a long line of men and women from John Reed to Arthur Miller, who have affected American thought and helped to make American literature. The majority have broken with communism sooner or later, but some have been broken by it, and some have maintained over years and years a strangely equivocal relationship.

What communism has offered the intellectuals can be described, as the title of this volume indicates, in religious terms. It has offered them redemption from sin, the fellowship of true believers, and an all-inclusive theology. Redemption from sin—or, as we find it easier to say, relief from a sense of guilt—is discussed in several of these essays. Whatever their subconscious origins, the feelings of guilt seem to derive from the intellectual's awareness of the contrast between his own well-being and the woes of society. (Most of the intellectuals who turned to communism in the early 30's had not personally suffered from the depression; many of them were considerably better off than they had been in the 20's.) Guilt vanishes with the opportunity for sacrifice in the cause of human betterment, a cause to which the Marxist dialectic guarantees success. As for fellowship, or companionship, that is something that the detached intellectual always thinks he wants, though quite probably he would not know what to do with it if he had it. A few intellectuals, I think, have found actual companionship in the party, but more have found an illusion that did just as well or even better. Most party relationships are stringently impersonal, but the devout convert can easily believe that he is bound by close fraternal ties to the workers of the world.

When, on top of all this, the convert discovers Marxism, when intellectual is added to emotional satisfaction, the effect is overwhelming. "The new light seems to pour from all directions across the skull," Koestler writes; "the whole universe falls into pattern like the stray pieces of a jigsaw puzzle assembled by magic at one stroke. There is now an answer to every question, doubts and conflicts are a matter of the tortured past—a past already remote, when one had lived in dismal ignorance in the tasteless, colorless world of those who *don't know.* Nothing henceforth can disturb the convert's inner peace and certainty except the occasional fear of losing faith again. . . . "

But the god failed. Why? Most of the contributors to this volume reaffirm their belief in the ideals that they thought they were serving when they associated themselves with the party. Silone does so most eloquently: "But my faith in socialism (to which I think I can say my entire life bears testimony) has remained more alive than ever in me. In its essence it has gone back to what it was when I first revolted against the old social order: a refusal to admit the existence of destiny, an extension of the ethical impulse from the restricted individual and family sphere to the whole domain of human activity, a need for effective brotherhood, an affirmation of the superiority of the human person over all the economic and social mechanisms which oppress him." Both Fischer and Spender emphasize their "double rejection"—of the evils of communism and the evils of capitalism.

Are we to conclude, then, that the failure was really the god's fault? The answer is yes and no. It is yes insofar as the contributors believe that the ideals of communism were corrupted and betrayed by the backwardness of Russia. This is a well-recognized and partly tenable theory, according to which it was a tragic accident that the first Communist revolution took place in a country with a low standard of living and without democratic traditions. But most of the contributors also seem to feel that their ideals, though sound as far as they went, did not go far enough. Immediately after the sentences I have quoted, Silone writes, "As the years have gone by, there has been added to this an intuition of man's dignity and a feeling of reverence for that which in man is always trying to outdistance itself, and lies at the root of his eternal disquiet." "I thought, in my Soviet phase," Fischer says, "that I was serving humanity. But it is only since then that I have really discovered the human being." One by one these men confess a faith in values they ignored while they were Communists, thus admitting that failure was not something that happened to communism from the outside but was inherent in it.

Communism asserts that good comes out of evil, and there can be no more tempting dogma in desperate times such as ours. In *All the King's Men* Willie Stark tells Dr. Stanton that good is made out of evil because that is all there is to make it out of, and Willie has only himself to believe in, not the mysteries of the dialectic. Those of us who became Communists or fellow-travelers in the 30's were acutely conscious of the ineffectualness of good will against, first, the depression, and then the power of fascism. Perhaps we accepted the evil in communism not merely because of the dialectic's assurances but also because we craved evil's strength.

What should we have done? Should we have taken an absolutist stand for the good as we knew it, clinging to that as the tides of evil mounted about us? I scarcely think so. I believe we were right in trying to fight against evil with the best weapons we could find, even though that inevitably meant compromise with evil. What we should have remembered is that good cannot come out of evil unless there is a leaven of good in the first place, and we should have remembered that good in man is a delicate growth and will not survive if it is trampled upon. In short, we should have resisted absolutism of any kind.

It is hard to recall those days, and *The God that Failed* will render a valuable service if it brings them back to those who lived through them and gives them some sort of reality for those who did not. We ought to honor the men and women who from the outset saw the true nature of communism, but we should not assume that everyone who rejected communism was moved by sound insight and high ideals. The anti-Communist cause enlisted, as it still enlists, the cowardly, the selfish, and the ignorant. If we were worse than some, we were worse than some, we were better than others.

That is one of the things that we—"we ex-Communists . . . who know what it is all about"—have to tell our anti-Communist allies today. They err fatally if they assume that communism, even today, attracts only the worst.

"Anyone," writes Silone, "who thinks he can wean the best and most serious-minded young people away from communism by enticing them into a well-warmed hall to play billiards, starts from an extremely limited and unintelligent conception of mankind." What, then, are we to say of those who think they can destroy communism by loyalty tests and Smith acts and Feinberg laws? As the cultural conference at the Waldorf a year ago showed, the intellectual influence of communism at the

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present time cannot be lightly dismissed, and who can be sure that some combination of circumstances will not make it as powerful tomorrow as it was in the 30's? Not Stalin's communism, perhaps, but Tito's or that of some other leader who is none the less a Communist because he is Stalin's rival instead of his tool.

We should know better than most that there is no infallible inoculation against communism. Like all problems that really matter, this is a problem that can never be solved; it can only be worked on. We can work on it in many ways, but chiefly by teaching that the burdens from which we tried to escape are the inevitable burdens of the intellectual life. We cannot lay aside our burden of guilt because we are guilty and will remain so. We cannot escape from loneliness, certainly not by signing a party card and perhaps not at all. We must learn to live "in the tasteless, colorless world of those who don't know," without absolute assurances of the success of our cause.

Mr. Crossman observes that those who have been closely associated with communism are permanently affected by the experience, and of course he is right. The effects are often disturbing, sometimes revolting. But there is one vice of which ex-Communists are less likely to be guilty, and that is smugness. The restless speculations of a Koestler and the deeply moving humility of a Silone testify equally to the bitter operations of self-distrust. If communism is, as I believe, merely a symptom, merely one consequence of a crisis in human history, this self-distrust may have more than an immediate usefulness.

It is not only against communism that the future needs to be warned but also against all absolutist systems of salvation that have been or may be proposed.

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The American Demagogue

PROPHETS OF DECEIT: A STUDY OF THE TECHNIQUES OF THE AMERICAN AGITATOR. By LEO LOWENTHAL and NORBERT GUTERMAN. Harper. 164 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by IRWIN ROSS

PROPHETS OF DECEIT (one of the series, "Studies in Prejudice," sponsored by the American Jewish Committee) is a useful work. Here for the first time we have a substantial study of the appeal made by the lunatic-fringe fascist to the American populace.

Analyzing the texts of speeches and printed matter, the authors shrewdly appraise the psychological meaning underlying the soapboxers' ravings. The value of the work lies in the detail of its analysis, for the sum total of revelations follows lines by now familiar to students of the subject. But here we see the specific, emotionally loaded arguments by which our tinhorn fascists exploit a psychic malaise that afflicts every stratum of society; by which they endeavor to provide outlets for aggression that both relieve the individual's tension and further exacerbate his frustration; and furnish fantasies of retribution that are socially explosive and yet have the ring of the good, old-fashioned, one-hundred-per-cent American Way.

New and particularly valuable is the detailed dissection of the main themes in the agitator's verbal arsenal—a dissection that in every case goes beyond the visible screed to lay bare its "latent content." From the tangled skein of hundreds of speeches, pamphlets, and newspaper editorials, the authors unravel twenty-one dominant themes—everything from the characterization of the followers as The Eternal Dupes to the apotheosis of the leader as Bullet-Proof Martyr.

The Eternal Dupes (the authors capitalize the themes) are hounded by Conspiracy, world-wide in scope, ancient in origin. This perpetual Conspiracy denies the Dupes the good things in life—the Forbidden Fruit—which the enemy devours with insatiable greed. The enemy himself is variously characterized as the Reds, the Plutocrats, the Corrupt Government, the Foreigner, vague and monstrous shapes which eventually coalesce into one dominant image: the Jew. In the end, the depredations of the Jewish-Plutocrat-Communist (the agitator offers many rationales to make this amalgam plausible) will lead to a fearful holocaust, a gory picture of Doom, thrilling to contemplate. The Dupes, as they hear the Call to the Hunt, are now addressed as Simple Americans, the future Watchdogs of Order, who will undertake the climactic Housecleaning under the leadership of the Great Little Man, the Bullet-Proof Martyr.

Along the way come gleams of insight that repay close reading. A random sampling: The agitator continually reviles his audience as simpletons, ignoramuses. Yet here is shrewd logic. "Even while he tells his listeners that they are a group of fools, the agitator lays claim to their confidence—for how could someone who warns and insults them possibly want to cheat them?" Or take the matter of the visions of imminent doom with which the agitator continually terrifies his followers. These fantasies have a bountiful sexual content, and it becomes apparent that doom holds many unspoken pleasures. "It may be conjectured that by his references to rape, incest, and plunder, the agitator evokes sadistic fantasies that add a connotation of promise to the warning — his followers may vaguely hope that when the deluge comes they, too, may be allowed to perform the acts that are attributed to the enemy." Or, again, the agitational value of vividly portraying the luxurious excesses of the rich. "Appealing to puritanical attitudes the agitator condemns indulgence not in order to propose the elimination of poverty, but rather to exasperate his followers' feelings of envy while simultaneously arousing their sense of guilt at being envious."

However suggestive these interpretations, only their plausibility can prove their truth. The scope of the book allows no other validation. For except in two or three places, no effort is made to characterize audience response —we have neither analysis of typical fascist followers nor an impressionistic description of a typical audience listening to a speech. The authors acknowledge this deficiency and in their preface write, "We recognize that our interpretations cannot claim to represent actual audience reactions. Rather, our purpose here has been to establish hypotheses on possible reactions." In their text, however, their comments are often not cast in the form of hypotheses; they rather carry the ring of certainty.

This stylistic objection aside, there is a real question of the wisdom of so narrowing the scope of the work. One can understand the demands of economy. And yet, by the end of the book, the reader is left with the nagging thought that a bit of audience data might modify some of the most self-consistent theoretical formulations.

The curiously disembodied air that the book often has may well come from the lack of audience-contact, and also from limiting the analysis to purely textual data. Might there not have been some value in exploring the whole range (as the subtitle seems to promise) of agitational techniques—the physical setting of the meeting, the histrionics of the speaker, the role of ritual, song, and so on? Fascist techniques, after all, have never been limited to the purely verbal.

One can argue, as well, with the exclusion of the Communist from this study of "the American Agitator." Normally, economy and convenience would justify limiting the inquiry to the fascist agitator. But one gets the impression that the authors exclude the Communist because he is regarded as an altogether different bird, with entirely different methods and techniques. And yet, as the thematic analysis proceeds, many points of similarity appear — for example, Communists and fascists both make use of disease and filth metaphors in attacking their enemies, and to justify the need for a "purge." Moreover, as the authors point out, "Stereotypes utilizing the symbols of dirt, filth, and odor are used to impress the audience with the fact that all speeches and literature put out by the enemy should be discarded at once." Hadn't Stalin perfected this technique before Joe McWilliams?

The problem, one gathers, is that the authors regard the Communist as belonging in the ranks of reformers and revolutionaries who primarily make a rational appeal; whereas the fascist agitator primarily makes an irrational appeal. This

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distinction is not without ground, as evidenced by the more reasoned and scientific cast of much Communist argument, but it is perhaps unrealistic. It overlooks the elements of the irrational in all agitation, as well as slighting the rationality even in the manifest content of the fascists. How, for instance, would the authors deal with Huey Long, who certainly proposed some realistic palliatives—something the authors say The Agitator never does—amidst the most frenzied rabble-rousing? Long was certainly the most successful and the most dangerous of the American fuehrers. But, strangely, he, too, is outside the scope of this book.

The Inflation of Literature

THE CRIPPLED GIANT. By MILTON HINDUS. Boar's Head. 159 pp. $2.00.

Reviewed by IRVING HOWE

IN THE summer of 1948 Milton Hindus, then a young teacher of literature at the University of Chicago, made a strange journey. At some personal sacrifice, he went to Denmark to see Louis-Ferdinand Céline, the French novelist who had written anti-Semitic tracts prior to and early in the war and had been accused by the Resistance of collaborating with the Nazis. For some years Hindus had been Céline's most vocal American admirer and had helped him in many ways, from writing laudatory essays about his work to sending him food packages. Hindus' journey was strange not merely because he was a Jew visiting an apparently unrepentant anti-Semite, but because a major reason for his visit was his inability to reconcile himself to the fact that Céline was, in fact, an anti-Semite. In an introduction to an American reprint of Céline's novel *Death on the Installment Plan,* Hindus had speculated on the similarity between Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlets and Swift's "Modest Proposal," must as Gide had previously taken Céline's rantings for satire. (Previously, however, in a tortured article for an Australian magazine, Hindus had written, "I, a Jewish Nationalist, find myself in the position of defending an anti-Semite in his anti-Semitism—that is where the complications of modern society have led us. Society has grown so complicated that we no longer know whom to blame." The road to certainty was a devious one.)

Since his first Palestine visit in 1925, Meyer Levin has been in the vanguard of the modern Jew's quest for identification. Author of the earliest—and best—Palestine novel, *Yehuda*, of the outstanding book of Chassidic folklore, *The Golden Mountain*, of the monumental novel of American Jewish life, *The Old Bunch*; sole war correspondent on the Jewish story, and filmer of the "illegal" exodus from Warsaw to Haifa, he is the one writer equipped to present a whole view of this climactic era in Jewish life.

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Now certain kinds of Jewish publicists will immediately consign Hindus to perdition with the pat phrase: Jewish self-hatred. But that phrase provides only a simple discharge of emotion, not an understanding of problems. And while I can hardly call myself a "defender" of Hindus, I want, in these few lines, to get at what seems to me the heart of his problem—which is not his problem alone.

To do that, we must turn to Céline. Like Hindus, I greatly admire Céline's novels. Céline speaks for the underside of European society, the petty bourgeois crushed almost to *lumpen* status, the worker demoralized, the intellectual contemptuous of his own intellectuality. He represents the 20th-century underground man, fed up with ideas and ideologies, hating whatever is official, and despairingly aware of how incongruous is his overwrought consciousness in contrast with his feeble activity. In a brilliant essay on Céline's first novel, Leon Trotsky compared his protagonist with Poincaré. At first sight, this comparison may seem a piece of political forcing, but actually it directly reveals Céline's significance: Poincaré stands for the official cant of French society, Céline for the actual feeling at its base and in its interstices.

At the same time Céline is an aesthete (the crimes of Hitler, he told Hindus, were the result of bad taste) who fears and scorns his aestheticism. When Hindus showed him reviews of his books, for which he was probably ravenously hungry, Céline violently asserted his lack of interest in anything but "How much money will they bring me?" For all his great mimetic-literary gifts, Céline fears his mind, all mind; he is an intellectual suffering from an extreme case of self-disrespect, which is not necessarily incompatible with self-love. He is a romantic whose romanticism has curdled and who has no intellectual resources on which to fall back. Consequently the torrent of language in his novels, which is like a stream of noise designed to drown out the agonies of feeling and the burdens of thought.

Trotsky said something similar in political terms: "Céline will not write a second book with such an aversion for the lie and such a disbelief in the truth. The dissonance will resolve itself. Either the artist will make his peace with the darkness or perceive the dawn." Trotsky meant, of course, that anyone with so total a grasp of the decay of modern life would have to choose either fascism or socialism, and though one need not accept the political terms of his analysis, as I myself do, one must grant that he was right in insisting that Céline's dissonance is the dissonance of European society seeking resolution. And, in his gruesome anti-Semitic tracts, it found it.

Now it is to the credit of Milton Hindus that he sensed all this some years back, and therefore described Céline as a key artist of our time. But so great was his admiration for Céline's work that he literally could not bear the thought that Céline could sink to anti-Semitism. And so he went to Denmark to see for himself.

The Crippled Giant, the journal he kept during his visit, is a record of disillusionment. With a naivety that would be absurd were it not so pure, Hindus found to his horror that Céline was still an anti-Semite. "He [Céline] said . . . that the great crime of the Nazis was that they had awakened anti-Semitism without having any real program. . . . He knows that in writing a violent diatribe like *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in 1938 against the Jews, he was like a man screaming 'Fire' along with the Hitlerian maniacs in the crowded theater of Europe, but he sees his case *from within* and knows the train of causes that brought him to that act and therefore expects to be forgiven." And again: "I asked Céline if he blamed the Jews for getting France into the war, and he said no at first and then modified that with the statement that the Jews had a part in starting the war, but that their part was no larger than Hitler's." And this to a Jew who had been his most intrepid American defender and had journeyed thousands of miles to see him.

Céline is a very sick man. During his conversations with Hindus, he betrayed signs of extreme paranoia, was subject to irrational avarice, found great pleasure in humiliating his visitor, and showed a blatant callousness with respect to his own moral responsibility and guilt. Clearly his mentality reflects that of a broad stratum in Europe: a mentality driven to irrational, sadistic, and self-humiliating excesses. As Céline perceptively and sadly remarked of himself: "I'm like the porcupine—if I uncurl I'm lost."

Meanwhile Hindus suffered terribly. He developed tics in his eye, "unaccountable" pains in his legs and fingers. "My feelings toward Céline undergo as many alternations as do those of a disappointed lover." Finally, the disappointed lover rebelled, and began abusing Céline in his journal with as little dignity as Céline had abused him in conversation. Yet, in the end, enough love remained for Hindus to offer Céline whatever royalties he would make on the book, despite his recognition that "this man is across too great an abyss from me to be reached ever."

The Crippled Giant is written in a tone of melodramatic hysteria that might be tolerable if it announced something genuinely shocking (say, that Russia was a slave state at a time when most intellectuals supported Stalinism), but which seems inappropriate for a rather belated personal discovery. After all, Hindus, like any other reasonably intelligent person, should always have known what he so painfully learned: that a great writer can also be a great scoundrel.

Yet a particular significance lies in Hindus's experience: it is a classic instance of what might be called the "culture sickness" increasingly prevalent among American intellectuals and the intellectualized middle class. Hindus's previous inability to see the truth about Céline was based, I think, on an extreme overvaluation of literature at the expense of immediate personal and social experience: a writer as good as Céline—how *could* he be a fascist? This overvaluation, or misunderstanding, of culture is widespread in America today partly because of the failure of radical politics and the intellectuals' consequent sense of social powerlessness. As an intelligent man Hindus could easily have seen the simple truth about Céline, but his supreme attachment to literature would not let him. As long, however, as we are unable properly to distinguish between literature and experience, as long as we fail to acknowledge that a writer who provides us the deepest aesthetic satisfactions can also hold the most repugnant opinions and values, we shall muddle both our reading and our lives. How it is possible for a man to write the profoundest truth in one book and the vilest lies in another is indeed a heart-breaking question; but first we must acknowledge that it is a real question.

I am afraid that Hindus has not recovered from his "culture sickness," for toward the end of his book he begins to doubt the value of Céline's novels. But that is just to reverse his original error. The books stand, their value unimpaired by Céline's personal wretchedness. Hindus says that "Céline is a splinter in my mind that I've got either to absorb completely or eject completely." And there is the root of his trouble, as of his sad and humiliating experience—for loyalty to literature and to life requires that the splinter be neither ejected nor absorbed.

Volume 51

AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1950. Prepared by the American Jewish Committee. Morris Fine, Editor; Jacob Sloan, Assistant Editor; and Irving Kaplan, Editorial Assistant. The American Jewish Committee and The Jewish Publication Society of America. 590 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by SAMUEL KOENIG

THE current issue, the fifty-first, of this standard reference work has undergone some important changes. Not only has the format of the volume been increased in size and its general physical make-up made more attractive, but its contents have been expanded and rearranged. Statistical matter, which previously appeared at the end of the book, has been incorporated in the body of the volume, and a detailed index has been added. The result is a more handsome as well as more useful volume.

About one half of the year book is devoted to descriptions of various aspects of Jewish life in the United States during the past year, grouped under four major headings: socio-economic, civic and political, communal, and cultural phases of Jewish life. The other half is given over to accounts of Jewish life and activities throughout the world, and includes a record of the United Nations deliberations on human rights, directories of Jewish organizations, lists of Jewish periodicals, and a number of other items that have become regular fixtures of the series. Perhaps more so than in previous years the editors have succeeded in presenting a well-rounded and comprehensive picture of Jewish life, particularly in the United States.

Considerable space in the first section is devoted to two leading articles, one on certain demographic features of American Jews by Ben B. Seligman, and the other on their economic status by Eli E. Cohen. Both of these articles undertake to assess and evaluate the findings of various community surveys and other studies made in recent years, and to arrive at some sort of general interpretation of the diverse data. Both reports go into rather detailed and painstaking examinations of the available facts and figures, with, however, only meager results. Owing to the different objectives of the communities making surveys, leading to different approaches and different means of collecting data, the authors are not able to arrive at safe generalizations past the few general facts that are already known: as, for example, that the Jewish population is replenishing itself at a slower rate than the population as a whole, that Jews tend to have smaller families, live in urban areas, and occupationally are to be found concentrated in trade and commerce, white collar work, and the professions. The article on economic status and occupational structure finds that the living standard of the American Jew compares favorably with that of the average American; and adds the further interesting fact, emerging from an analysis of various studies, that whereas for the country as a whole the number of clerical workers and semi-skilled factory workers increased between 1940 and 1948, among the Jews the number in these categories declined (as did the number of salespeople), and there was an increase in the proprietary and managerial classes.

Even these few conclusions are, undoubtedly, as the writers are well aware, open to question. And the same is true for the Jewish population statistics included in the volume, which are almost entirely a recapitulation of the data in the preceding volume, based largely on rough estimates. Yet in spite of the serious gaps in the available data, there probably exists more and better information about the Jews than about any other ethnic group in the United States.

THE sections dealing with the civic, communal, and cultural aspects are vivid and readable, and it is particularly gratifying to note that the various specific fields are generally considered from a broad point of view, that is, within the framework of American society rather than as problems limited to the Jews. There are signs of a recognition, long overdue among the masses of the Jewish people, and even among Jewish writers, that Jewish problems cannot be isolated from those facing the larger community.

In the present volume, this broader outlook is particularly evident in the handling, by authorities, of such topics as civil rights, education, employment, and intergroup relations.

The cultural life of American Jews is particularly well recorded in the current volume, in articles on English-language literature of Jewish interest, Yiddish and Hebrew literature, Jewish scholarship, painting, the dance, music, the motion picture, and radio and television—each is treated critically as well as descriptively by writers demonstrating a thorough knowledge and understanding of their fields. (In such a complete catalogue, one is surprised to see that the theater has been omitted.)

The *Year Book* has for many years served as an indispensable reference work in the field of Jewish affairs, and the changes introduced in the present volume have further enhanced its value as a source of information on things Jewish.

Its logical arrangement, readability, authoritative treatment of subjects, and objectivity of approach make it a work that scholars and intelligent laymen alike will find most useful. We are all indebted to the American Jewish Committee which for more than a half-century has prepared this serviceable and increasingly valuable handbook for the Jewish community and the general public.

What is Jewish Art?

JEWISH ARTISTS OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES. By KARL SCHWARTZ. Philosophical Library. 273 pp., 48 ill. $4.75.

Reviewed by S. LANE FAISON, JR.

HERE, in all conscience, is a bad book. It is badly written, it is bad critically, and it is bad historically. Worst of all, it is a book without a subject.

Mr. Schwartz's survey contains thumbnail sketches of the careers of some fifty painters, sculptors, and graphic artists, with critical comment casually interspersed, plus one illustration per artist. The final chapter adds a brief account of the work of contemporary Israelis. The only common denominator which links this company is the fact that each of them is Jewish. The mere compilation is supposed to demonstrate "with great distinctness the fallacy of the frequently heard assertion that the Jew is actually untalented in art." This statement may serve to indicate the intellectual level of the audience toward which the book is directed. I did not suppose that it would come as a revelation that Pissarro, Liebermann, Modigliani, Epstein, Lipchitz, Soutine, Chagall, Weber, Sterne, and Shahn happened to be Jewish. The complete list, however, may contain one or two surprises for the reader who pays no more attention to such matters than I do.

Unless it is to overcome some unfortunate sense of cultural inferiority, the point of writing a book on Jewish artists might well be, I should think, to explore the possibility that there is something Jewish about the art of Jews. Whether the answer turns out to be affirmative or negative, the problem seems worthy of a good critical and historical mind. No such inquiry, however, brings Mr. Schwartz's book into focus. In the introduction he denies that the very problem exists: ". . . Like any artist, the Jew, too, is the reflection of his era and his surroundings. However, due to the fact that, unlike other artists, he does not create in his own surroundings, his achievements may not be evaluated as specifically Jewish. It is not—or at least only in negligible degree—Jewish art, but art of a Jew. No matter how greatly it is influenced by his temperament and character; regardless of the high quality it attains by virtue of his talent—it nevertheless is conditioned by the circumstances of time and environment."

Having thus reduced himself to self-evident truths, Mr. Schwartz concludes his introduction with the following burst of creative writing: "It is our intention to present here the many aspects and vicissitudes of the appearance of the Jewish artist from the moment of his entrance upon the world stage.

"Let us raise the curtain, then, and review the individual figures."

THE dreary recital now gets under way. We learn that Moritz Oppenheim (born 1800, death date not given) was the first Jewish artist after the pivotal date of September 27, 1791, when the French Constituent Assembly voted full

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citizenship for Jews. If Plate 1 is a fair sample of Oppenheim's work, I feel comforted in my total ignorance of his contribution. Of one portrait Schwartz says, "it is a work full of essentiality that cannot deny a certain Jewish sentimentality." The first clause leaves me in utter confusion; of the second I should like to hear more, if there is any truth in it.

Distinctions between the Impressionists as individual artists provide a critical problem of absorbing interest. Here was a group effort which appeared, superficially at least, to override personal expression. Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, and Renoir all seem to have had a perverse habit of painting like each other. On the whole, however, Pissarro's eye was more sensitive to informal and picturesque effects. He seldom caught Monet's monumentality, Renoir's sensuality, or Sisley's Shelleyan lightness. Mr. Schwartz seems to agree with the first part of this observation, but he goes on to explain that Pissarro "saw the country in a different light than his colleagues, and took note of colors that they were not aware of. . . . His eye was accustomed to the glowing light of his native South, and he came from a race [*sic*] that had keen powers of observation." Overlooking the racial problem for a moment, would not the student of the Impressionists suppose that these words applied to Renoir rather than to Pissarro? (Incidentally, I take it that "Jewish sentimentality" does not apply in Pissarro's case. Or does it?)

In the chapter called "The Great Masters" appears the name Lesser Ury (no dates given). We apprehend that Ury was "without a doubt the most important pastellist of the 19th century. He leaves the French masters far behind, for he augments the color scale to the highest possible degree." The only illustration is an oil that looks like a very gauche imitation of middle Corot.

One should, it seems to me, proceed with caution in any discussion of the "Jewish race." Schwartz, however, appears to concur with Hitler's theory of racism, for he accepts without qualm Napoleon's phrase about "the essence specific to the Jewish blood." In the final chapter, "A Growing Palestine," it emerges with great clarity that this book is really only a piece of nationalist propaganda. If you accept the author's motive and suppress all critical standards, perhaps you can survive a dull rehearsal of history, most of it irrelevant. The best proof of a growing culture would be to demonstrate a chain reaction of spiritual enthusiasm over an extended period of time. But provincial appeals to race snobbery will and should have exactly the opposite effect from what Schwartz presumably intended.

Book Reviewers in this Issue

Granville Hicks is the author of *Small Town* and other books and articles. He was, during the 30's, America's foremost Marxist literary critic.

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